THE

LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 15 October, 1933 Number 10

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND FASCISM
R. P. D.

Dictatorship at Brighton and Hastings
J. R. CAMPBELL

The Assyrians in Iraq
R. BRIDGEMAN

Dialectical Materialism and Communism (concluded)
L. RUDAS

Book Reviews

Published at
7 JOHN STREET, Theobald's Road, LONDON, W.C.1

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A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 15 OCTOBER, 1933 NUMBER 10

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Published at
7 JOHN STREET, Theobald's Road, LONDON, W.C.1.

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The Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices :
7 JOHN STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.
Telephone : HOLBORN 6656

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1933 : *Subscription Rates*
[PAID IN ADVANCE]

British Isles :

One year - 7/- Six months - 3/6

Abroad :

One year 8/- or $2.00 Six months 4/- or $1.00

American Subscription Representative :—Philip Novick, 270 Broadway, Suite 1401, New York, N.Y., U.S.A.

The Labour Monthly is also obtainable wholesale from Workers' Bookshop, 16 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2.

Advertisement Rates : £8 os. od. per cover page and pro rata. £5 os. od. per text page and pro rata (⅛th page minimum).

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The articles in *The Labour Monthly* are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York, N.Y., as well as in the annual index in each December issue.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

A Road to Disaster—Abstractions and Realities—The Price of "Democracy"—"Apathy"—Discredit of Reformism—Fascism and "Socialism"—"Neo-Socialism"—Rôle of Petit-Bourgeoisie—Reformism Breeds Fascism—Through "Democracy" to Fascism—Steps to Intensified Dictatorship—Roosevelt and National Government—Hindenburg and Dollfuss—The End of the Road—Working-Class Front or "Democracy"?—A Fascist "Clean-Up"—The Alternatives—No Practical Lead—"Hope to God"—"Cannot Answer"—"We Shall Be Beaten"—The Heart of Reformism—The "Impossibility" to Fight—Second International Congress—No Issues Faced—Main Resolution—Revolution For What?—Fascist Echoes in Second International—Socialist League "Neo-Socialism"—The Issue in Britain

IT is impossible to survey the proceedings of the Trades Union Congress at Brighton and the reports prepared for the Labour Party Conference at Hastings without a sense of menace. The present situation is raising the sharpest issues for the working class. Capitalism is advancing to the most extreme forms of attack upon the workers, to war, to intensified dictatorship, to a fury of world reaction without equal. With merciless completeness we are experiencing the realities of the supposed alternative path to the working-class revolution; and the realities are revealed, not as easy, peaceful advance, capture of parliament, growing consolidation of the working-class movement, reforms, prosperity, and so to socialism; but, on the contrary, as ever-increasing crisis, suffering of the workers, savage intensification of capitalist dictatorship, distrust and disillusionment of the workers, and destruction of the working class organisations. This is the inevitable consequence of delay of the working-class revolution in the present epoch, when the crisis is calling for it with ever greater urgency as the only solution. The German working

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class in the front trenches is paying the price for the line of democratic legalism and coalition with capitalism which opened the path to the victory of fascism. In words, this line is now condemned by all, including by the leaders of the Second International who endorsed it and hold full responsibility for it. Yet, in fact, exactly this same line is now being preached and practised by the present leadership in Britain and in every country where the Second International still holds sway. The same cup of poison is being offered to the workers to drink once again. The same blind faith in capitalist democracy. The same legalism. The same rejection of the united working-class front. The same alliance with capitalism in daily practice. The same war on Communism as the main enemy, and splitting of the working-class organisations to drive out all militant working-class expression. How can the same policy be expected to lead to a different outcome? The lead, the decisions and the leading speeches of Brighton and Hastings, and of the Second International Congress at Paris, should be a warning signal to the workers. Reformism has learnt nothing from the victory of Fascism in Germany save to try to outbid Fascism. The lead of the Labour Party Executive and General Council to-day, no less than the lead of the Cripps-Cole-Marquet-Déat "neo-socialist" supposed alternative, is a lead to disaster.

FASCISM cannot be discussed in isolation from the general line of capitalism. We are not discussing in a schoolroom alternative forms of government, abstract democracy, fascism, proletarian dictatorship. We are faced with a concrete situation. Capitalism can no longer maintain its power by the old means. The crisis is driving the whole political situation at an accelerating pace. All social and international contradictions are brought to a new and greater sharpness by the crisis. All strata of the population are effected by the crisis. For the decade and a half since the war capitalism has maintained its power mainly on the basis of Social-Democracy as the instrument to hold in the workers and prevent the working-class revolution. In return for disciplining the

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workers and preaching lies about "democracy" and the "peaceful path to Socialism," Social-Democracy has been given ministerial posts, patronage and pickings; and this process of being drawn into the capitalist machine is held up to the workers as evidence of the advance to "power." Thus the continuance of the Social-Democratic Government in Prussia for fourteen years, and the presence of Social-Democratic Police Presidents all over the country, was held up as evidence of the gradual, peaceful conquest of "power" by the workers. How much this "power" was worth, when it came to the test, or rather, where the real power lay, has been abundantly shown by the event. The same applies to the Labour Governments.

BUT this system, or particular mechanism of capitalist rule in the post-war crisis, is not eternal—as the Labour leaders, on the flood-tide of Mondism and successive Labour Governments, have fondly hoped. The crisis drives to sharper political issues, to intensified class struggle, to the need of new forms of capitalist rule, to rapid and desperate emergency measures. The working class, tied to capitalism by the reformist leadership, is paralysed from being able to play its rôle as political leader in this crisis and draw all the discontented masses under its leadership for the overthrow of capitalism. On the contrary, since there is no standing still, the exact reverse process takes place. As the crisis develops, the working class appears to grow, not stronger, but weaker. The policy of coalition with capitalism has steadily demoralised and sapped the strength of the old working-class organisations, brought membership lower and lower every year (the affiliated membership this year of the Labour Party at two millions and of the Trades Union Congress at three and one-third millions is the lowest since the war), and destroyed the confidence of the workers in their organisation and leadership. The class struggle goes forward; the weakening authority of the reformist leadership, who are increasingly discredited by events, cannot prevent this; but

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the struggles have to take place increasingly against the official leadership, as in the London bus strike or the Berlin transport strike last year. The struggle of the workers has to find new forms, in the face of the heavy opposition of the organised reformist machine to strangle every effort. Thus the working-class forces are weakened and divided at the very moment of the heaviest capitalist attack, not because of the militant workers who remain true to the class struggle, but because of the alliance of the reformist machine with capitalism. This progressive weakening of the workers' forces is the price of the path of bourgeois "democracy," of Social-Democracy.

SPEAKING at the Trades Union Congress, an official of the Distributive Workers, L. Hogan, described the present situation of the working class, as he found it, in the following terms :

> Our members are in the main indifferent and listless, and require the transfusion, if not of new blood, certainly of new ideals.
>
> There is no concerted policy. The General Council is helpless ; the rank and file are apathetic and indifferent.

"Indifference." "Listlessness." "Apathy." This is the description by an active trade union organiser of the situation in the working class, as he finds it, in relation to the official policy, in the midst of the heaviest crisis of capitalism. It is obvious that this is a situation which means the open path to fascism, if a strong militant drive does not reach the mass of the workers in time. But it is just a strong militant drive which the existing official leadership uses its entire machinery to prevent and crush. Hogan's statement, despite its value as evidence, is in reality misleading, for two reasons. First, because he completely ignores the actual militant efforts from a section of the rank-and-file membership, the rank-and-file movements, vigilance movements, &c., which have to fight for their existence against the efforts of the official machine to crush them, and still win strong support ; compare the vote at the National Union of Railwaymen's Conference of 31 for the united front, as against 49 for the official policy, or, at the

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Amalgamated Engineering Union National Committee, of 18 for ending the anti-Communist discriminations, as against 21 for the official policy. Every strike has shown the readiness of the workers to follow, wherever there is a fighting lead. Second, and still more, because he completely ignores the actual heart of the situation, the realities of the General Council's policy. He declares that the General Council is "helpless," has "no concerted policy." On the contrary. The General Council has a most definite "concerted policy"—a policy of capitalism. That—and not the psychology of the workers—is what is sick in the present situation of the working-class movement. And that is what opens the way to the danger of fascism.

FOR, at the same time as the organised working-class forces are thus weakened and demoralised, the way is opened for alternative forces, which could otherwise play only a subordinate part, to come to the front. The mixed intermediate strata or so-called middle classes, who can play no independent political rôle, but can only act as the ally of either the working class or of capital, come to the front, in proportion as the active rôle of the working class is weakened. They are sharply affected by the crisis, by inflation, by debts, by loss of savings, by the ruin of small businesses, by unemployment, by narrowing of the professions, by all the operations of finance-capital. Their lower strata are the natural ally of the working class in the war on finance-capital. But they see from their point of view the modern parliamentary state as a coalition of Big Capital and Labour bosses, with themselves left out, and feel themselves squeezed by ever-increasing taxation for the benefit of big business and the system of social services to the workers, that is, the system of social reformism. Nor can the reformist Labour propaganda, which dare not touch the roots of finance-capital, expose to them the real reasons of their plight, or give them the revolutionary lead for which they are groping, to mobilise them against their real enemy. Thus they become easy prey for the demagogic propaganda of Big Capital to give them a sham

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revolutionary lead, exploiting to the full the weakness and corruption of Labourism, and organise them as a counter-force against the working class, in contradiction to their own interests. Capital is able for the first time to organise, no longer a mere mercenary army for its support, but a mass movement, built on disgust with Reformism, built out of these intermediate strata and unstable, discontented, disillusioned working-class elements, against the organised working class. From the ruins and discredit of Reformism, Fascism springs. Mosley springs from the Labour Party.

THE great part of current reformist discussion of fascism treats fascism as an independent movement of the petit-bourgeoisie directed equally against the working-class movement and against the big capitalists. Even as late as May 2 the *Daily Herald* could still write :

> The " National Socialists," it is essential to remember, call themselves " Socialist " as well as " National." Their " Socialism " is not the Socialism of the Labour Party or that of any recognised Socialist Party in other countries.
>
> But in many ways it is a creed that is anathema to the big landlords, the big industrialists and the big financiers.
>
> And the Nazi leaders are bound to go forward with the " Socialist " side of their programme.
>
> (*Daily Herald* editorial on " Hitler's May Day," May 2, 1933.)

Thus Fascism in the view of the Labour Party is almost a wing of Socialism, a rather unorthodox variety of socialism, but " anathema to the big landlords, the big industrialists and the big financiers " (who, curiously enough, maintained it in funds and finally placed it in power).

FROM this the reasoning naturally follows, which is now widely current in the ranks of Social-Democracy, that Social-Democracy must learn from Fascism, that the workers' movement must adapt itself to the petit-bourgeoisie, must drop the narrow working-class basis, must broaden its basis, must take on a " national " character, &c. This was the line of reasoning of " Neo-Socialism " (Marquet—Déat—Renaudel)

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at the French Socialist Conference, which has wide repercussions in the other parties. We even find leaders of the Belgian Party regretting that they originally called the party the Workers' Party (Parti Ouvrier Belge), and considering whether it may not be desirable to change the name. A similar line is expressed in the argument of the German Social Democratic leadership defending the May 17 vote for Hitler on the grounds that Social-Democracy needs to adapt itself more closely to " national " feeling. All this only serves to show how thin is the wall of partition between the ideology of Social-Democracy and Fascism.

BOTH the diagnosis on which this reasoning is based is false; and the reasoning which is drawn from it is only a further step in the degeneration of Social-Democracy and betrayal of Marxism and of the working class. Fascism is no independent movement of the petit-bourgeoisie. The petit-bourgeoisie is by the nature of its position incapable of an independent political rôle, and can only follow in the wake of either the working class or the bourgeoisie. It is in character essentially vacillating, and tends to follow the stream of the moment. For this reason the weakness of the working-class movement plays into the hands of fascism, of the utilisation of the petit-bourgeoisie by finance-capital. Fascism is a movement of mixed elements, dominantly petit-bourgeois, but also slum-proletarian and demoralised working class, financed and directed by finance-capital, by the big industrialists, landlords and financiers, to defeat the working-class revolution and smash the working-class organisations.

BUT the tactics of the working-class to counter fascism are not to abandon its independent rôle and endeavour to adapt itself to the basis of the petit-bourgeoisie. Just this has been the character already of reformism, which has opened the way to fascism. On the contrary, it is just the strong, independent, fearless leadership and fight of the working class which is able to draw the petit-bourgeoisie in its wake. This is already beginning to be visible in Germany

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where just the strong, unbroken fight and maintenance of its organisation and activity of the Communist Party is exerting an enormous influence on all strata of the population and beginning to give new heart to the panic-stricken petit-bourgeois elements under the terror, and to cause wavering among the lower sections of the Nazis. In this way, and in this way alone, the tables can be turned against the bourgeoisie. When the revolutionary working-class tide was at its height in Europe in 1918-21, then the various attempts of fascism and national-socialism (there was no lack of attempts of all kinds, and the ground was as ready in the existence of desperate, impoverished middle-class elements looking for a political lead) could make little headway; the petit-bourgeois elements vacillated or streamed with the working-class tide; the work of counter-revolution had to be left to the picked officers' corps. Only as Reformism grew in domination of the working-class movement, parallel with it Fascism grew.

IT is *out of the conditions of bourgeois democracy and reformism* that fascism grows. That is why the Labour Party line of rejection of the united working-class front against capitalism, and posing instead of an imaginary front of abstract "democracy" against "dictatorship" means in fact disaster for the workers and the victory of fascism. In the first place, the working-class forces are paralysed and disorganised by reformism and its denial of the class struggle and line of unity with capitalism. In the second place, the alternative forces are thus enabled to come to the front and take full advantage of the discredit of reformism. Finally, capitalism in the present stage of crisis requires intensified forms of dictatorship. It requires intensified dictatorship to meet the growing class contradictions arising from the crisis. It requires intensified dictatorship to carry through the emergency economic measures dictated by the crisis. It requires intensified dictatorship to realise the war preparations and increasing war-organisation of the state and industry, which is the character of its policy in the present stage of the crisis.

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BUT there is no sudden jump from an imaginary pure " democracy " to an imaginary " pure " dictatorship. Capitalism is not concerned with juristic forms for their own sake. Capitalism builds up its strengthened dictatorship in the first place through the existing " democratic " forms, and with the aid of Social-Democracy. Social-Democracy, in the name of the defence of " democracy," calls on the workers to give support to this intensified dictatorship. Only when the apparatus of more and more strengthened dictatorship has thus been built up within " democratic " forms, when the working-class forces have been thoroughly weakened and disorganised, when the growth of the crisis and of the class struggle compels more desperate measures, only then capitalism takes advantage of this situation, brings into play the fascist forces to smash the working-class organisations, and dismisses for the moment the Social-Democratic leadership who have served their purpose. That is how fascism develops in reality in the most typical modern practice ; and it is to this process that the Labour slogan of " Democracy versus Dictatorship " has no relevance whatever save to confuse the workers and leave them without a lead.

THE first forms of intensified capitalist dictatorship grow up within bourgeois " democratic " forms, and with the support of Social-Democracy. Observe the present acclamation of the Labour Party and trade union leadership for the Roosevelt emergency dictatorship, which is set up with the official support and co-operation of the American Federation of Labour. The Trades Union Congress officially acclaims the Roosevelt dictatorship ; its resolution

> appreciates the significance of the vigorous efforts now being made by President Roosevelt towards the stimulation and regulation of industry by means of the Industrial Recovery Act and allied legislation . . .
>
> Congress expresses the earnest hope that with the co-operation of the trade unions President Roosevelt will be able to overcome the difficulties involved in this decisive departure from the traditional individualism of American industry.

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This support is for the Roosevelt policy of inflation-robbery, intensified capitalist dictatorship, strengthening the big trusts, compulsory arbitration, prohibition of strikes, and war preparations. And this resolution is only the expression of the single line of all reformism in every country at the present stage. Jouhaux as French fraternal delegate at the Trades Union Congress " congratulated the American Federation of Labour on lending its aid to the effort " of President Roosevelt. The American delegate affirmed that " the American Federation of Labour was behind President Roosevelt in his attempt to bring back prosperity." The Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress call on the National Government to introduce similar measures to Roosevelt in Britain. And let it be noted that the National Government, itself the first step in the similar line of development in British conditions, was not only set up under the headship of the leader of the Labour Party, but that the Labour Party, according to Henderson's statement in the House of Commons on September 8, 1931, would have been perfectly prepared to consider entering it, had it only been properly invited.

" REVISION of Parliament," " Emergency Powers to meet the crisis," " strengthening of executive powers to meet the fascist danger "—these are the slogans that now begin to become current in Social-Democracy. To save " democracy," the capitalist dictatorship must be strengthened. In the same way the Brüning dictatorship and government by emergency decree was established by the support of Social-Democracy—always to save " democracy." To save " democracy " Hindenburg was elected President by the support of Social-Democracy ; and once elected, handed over power to the fascists. A similar process is revealed in the support of Dollfuss by Austrian Social-Democracy ; Dollfuss is acclaimed by all the " democratic " forces of Europe as the guardian of European " democracy " against Fascism ; and, once established, proceeds to build up step by step more closely the forms of fascist dictatorship, while the working-class forces are up to the present paralysed.

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THUS in the name of "democracy" the pre-conditions of fascism are built up. This is the actual point of fight confronting the working class in every country *before* fascism, the fight against the intensified capitalist dictatorship and attack. But in place of calling the workers to this fight, Social-Democracy, in the name of the "defence of democracy," calls on the workers to support this intensified capitalist dictatorship, and seeks to fix their eyes instead, not on the real struggle confronting them, but on a hypothetical future struggle against a future fascist menace, "when the time comes," "if they resort to violence," &c. Then, when the final stage of the attack does come, when the forces of the capitalist dictatorship have been fully built up, when the working-class forces have been fully weakened and disorganised, then the Social-Democratic leadership discovers that it is "too late," "the balance of forces is unfavourable," it is "impossible to fight with success" (the line of Kautsky's defence of the defeat without a struggle); and the final surrender takes place without a struggle.

THE path of bourgeois "democracy," of reformism, of Social-Democracy, leads to fascism. That is the essential lesson of the present situation. That is the essential lesson of Germany. That is the heart of the present controversy, which the Labour Party tries to hide behind the abstract opposition of "democracy" and "dictatorship." Fascism is not inevitable. The workers can defeat, can prevent fascism. But only if the workers build and maintain their united front against capitalism; only if the workers resist the present attack of capitalism and preparations of fascism; only if the workers carry forward their fight and advance to the workers' dictatorship. The workers' dictatorship is the only final guarantee against fascism. Bourgeois democracy is no permanent stopping place, but only a transitional form. In the conditions of crisis and intensified class struggle it evolves either in the direction of naked capitalist dictatorship and suppression of the working-class

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organisations, or to the workers' dictatorship. There is no other final alternative. The illusion of a third path leads only to disaster for the workers, as the history of these fifteen years has shown. If the workers are asked to put their trust in capitalist " democracy," and to unite with capitalism on this basis, then the workers are asked to put their trust in paper, and are left defenceless at the mercy of capitalism.

THE fight against fascism is a phase of the fight of the working class against capitalism in the extreme stage of the crisis of capitalism. It cannot be separated from the general line of the working-class fight against capitalism. It cannot be fought save on the basis of the class front of the workers, that is, of the united working-class front. The whole swindle of the Labour Party " Democracy versus Dictatorship " line is to deny and conceal this actual class content of the fight, and to substitute an apparently classless ideal abstract liberal opposition. But in fact this exactly reverses the class content of the fight. For " democracy " is identified with the existing capitalist state of British Imperialism. (" Much has been said in this Congress," observed the Indian reformist delegate to the Trades Union Congress " about dictatorship. Foreign rule is a form, a terrible form of dictatorship, if carried on by bombing on the frontiers and the policeman's lathi elsewhere " : needless to say, this sidelight on the realities of the British " democracy " which the delegates were being adjured so passionately to defend was not followed up.) " Democracy," in short, is identified with Capitalism. " Dictatorship," on the other hand, as the speeches made abundantly clear, is identified with Communism, that is, with the working-class revolution and the working-class struggle. Thus the real issue, innocently concealed under " democracy versus dictatorship," is Capitalism versus the Working-Class Revolution, with the Labour Party on the side of capitalism. From this line it automatically follows that the immediate response of the Labour and trade union leadership to the victory of Fascism in Germany was to announce a " Clean-up " in the Labour Movement—against whom? Against the

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danger of fascism? Against the reactionaries? Against officials in the pocket of the employers or the secret service? Not at all. Against the militant workers, against the revolutionary workers, against all who could be suspected of sympathy with Communism or even readiness to work with the Communists, that is, against all who can alone be counted on to fight fascism in the hour of danger. In other words, it was *a "clean-up" of the Labour Movement for the benefit of fascism.* The direction of the attack is exactly the same as the main offensive of fascism—against Communism, against Marxism, against the militant workers. The Labour offensive and the Fascist offensive are revealed as part of the same offensive.

IN the face of the intensified capitalist attack, in face of the advance to fascism, in face of the advance to war, there are only two possible lines before the workers. One is resistance. That is the line of the united working-class front. The other is surrender. That is the line of complete enslavement of the working class and destruction of the working-class organisations. But the Labour leadership have rejected the line of the united working-class front. Therefore their line is inevitably the line of surrender. And that is the real practical meaning for the workers behind the empty misleading slogan of "Democracy versus Dictatorship." How completely this is so, how completely the fight is already surrendered in advance by this leadership, was shown at the Trades Union Congress.

FOR even if the issue of the class struggle of the workers against capitalism and fascism is denied, and the abstract issue of "democracy" and "dictatorship" is placed instead, the question still remains with all the greater force: How shall the workers escape fascism? What is the weapon of resistance to the fascist attack of capitalism? How shall a concrete situation such as that which revealed itself in Germany be met? Invoking "democracy," appealing to the

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sacred " constitution " will not help. In practice, the sacred " constitution " will be found to be most marvellously adapting itself to the requirements of the fascist dictatorship. If even the theoretically perfect " democratic " written Weimar Constitution could permit the complete fascist dictatorship to be built up within its four corners, how much more so the notorious unwritten reactionary British Constitution, that limitless treasurehouse of tricks and devices for fulfilling every wish of the British bourgeoisie ? The German Social Democratic leadership also followed most faithfully the line of invoking " democracy," preaching the slogan of " democracy," appealing to the Weimar Constitution, and to its Supreme Court. All this did not prevent—in fact, facilitated by paralysing the workers—the victory of fascism.

TO this vital question before the working class, the question how to fight fascism, the Labour leadership, having rejected the united working-class front, can give no answer of practical action. They can only repeat the incantation of " democracy." The General Council at the Trades Union Congress, in all the wordy discussion on the issue, could offer no answer to the delegates. Or rather, they had an answer, though not an answer of action. The answer was a curious one, well worthy of note and deserving to be made widely known to all the workers. It was to pray to Almighty God that no such thing may happen ; for if it should happen, it would be impossible to prevent it. This may sound a caricature ; but it is in fact a literal summary of Citrine's " historic speech " (as all the Labour press proclaimed it).

SPEAKING of the collapse and surrender of the German trade union leaders, and explaining their refusal to call a general strike because a general strike would have been " an act fraught with the gravest consequences, consequences which might be described as nothing less than civil war," the leader of the General Council could not even make a show

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of condemning this line, or promising to act otherwise in Britain. He could only say :

> I hope to God we are never put into a similar position. I hope we never have to face that position.

And again, with regard to the growth of unemployment as the visible " common factor " both in Britain and in Germany :

> If that gets worse, I cannot answer for the consequences.

" Hope to God." " Cannot answer." Such is the final lead of British Labourism in the face of fascism. Just as the leader of the Labour Party, in the face of rising unemployment and the extreme crisis of capitalism, calls for a " campaign of prayer " and a " religious leader " (Lansbury in the *Times*, October 10, 1932), so the leader of British trade unionism, in the face of fascism, " hopes to God " that the issue will not have to be met.

OF one thing only Citrine is sure. It is impossible to fight. If it comes to a fight, the workers will be beaten.

> If we go in for the method of force, we shall be badly beaten.

And again :

> If we try to organise by force of arms, we shall be beaten.

" We shall be beaten." " We shall be badly beaten." Such is the litany of defeat before the battle, by which the reformist leaders seek to drill into the workers the sense of their own impotence. This is the open invitation to capitalism to launch the attack on the workers' organisations ; the workers are defenceless and cannot resist ; Social-Democracy, as the Chairman declared, is " peaceful, law-abiding, and shrinks from fratricidal conflict," and therefore is inevitably, as he finds, at the mercy of its bloodthirsty enemies.

> One of the tragic lessons of events in Germany was that the enemies of democracy were willing to shed blood to destroy liberty, and did not shrink from murder, arson and lawless action ; but Social-Democracy was peaceful, law-abiding and shrank from fratricidal strife.

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THE very heart of reformism is here laid bare. Capitalism is all-powerful. The workers are powerless against it. The workers must only hope to get what capitalism permits them through the legal forms capitalism permits. Let us cling to what capitalism may grant us through the forms of " democracy " (which were in fact only won by the violent struggle of the workers), and " pray to God " that if we are docile, capitalism may not strike us further. Such is the voice of the beaten, trembling slave, which expresses itself as the philosophy of reformism. The German reformist leadership spoke loudly beforehand of their readiness to resist " when the time came," " if the need should arise," " if the Nazis should resort to violence," &c. When the time came, they surrendered without a struggle and sought only to win the favour of the new masters. But the British reformist leaders have learnt their lesson. They do not even make a show of any intention to resist. Instead, they proclaim aloud beforehand the impossibility to resist. They have *surrendered to fascism before the battle.*

THE *impossibility to resist*, the impossibility to fight—that is the heart of Social-Democratic doctrine before fascism, as before the whole power of capitalism. From this root springs their scorn of the " romantic impossibilism " of the Communists, who are certain that the workers can overthrow the power of the capitalists in open struggle; their deep conviction of the necessity of adaptation to capitalism, to build on hopes of capitalist revival and prosperity, to seek to patch up capitalism in breakdown; their enthusiasm to follow every liberal capitalist charlatan, every Wilson or Ford or Keynes or Roosevelt who offers to lead them and show them the way; their impotent despair and lamentations and complaints of capitalism's ingratitude, when capitalism strikes them.

THIS was the character and the atmosphere which dominated the proceedings of the Paris Congress of the Second International in August. The Congress of the Second International could give no lead to the workers

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in the present situation, save lamentations over the defeat and pious litanies of faith in the " ultimate triumph " of socialism. It could neither draw the lesson from the past, nor give any concrete lead of struggle in the present. Its character was sufficiently resumed by the right-wing Déat, in *Le Populaire*, the organ of the French Socialist Party :

> As we had no expectations of this congress, it has not deceived us. After the storm the shipwrecked victims, received on a hospitable shore, relate their adventures and their misfortunes to their friends on the land. . . . For the moment it would be merely deceiving the workers to speak of the unshakable solidity of our ship. . . . The force of the Socialist International is for the moment considerably weakened, if not shattered. (*Le Populaire*, August 26, 1933.)

THERE was no attempt to face the lessons of the past, to analyse the line of Social-Democracy in Germany which has led to disaster, to reach a definite verdict and draw the conclusions. The resolution reached is completely silent on the line which has reached to disaster. In the speeches there was only a confusion of muffled criticism, apologetics, reproaches, deprecation and final hushing up. Wels, representing German Social-Democracy, could say :

> The worst error attributed to us was our policy of toleration under Brüning. . . It may well be that those who criticise our behaviour in that period are in the right ; but bear in mind, comrades, that we were not without insight as to the errors of that period.

It was left at that. Wels declared that he had feared to " have to meet searching and severe criticism which would test us sorely . . . dictated by the bitterness and disappointment felt in so many quarters when the strongest section of the International fell to pieces," but that he had been delighted instead to find " a spirit of good comradeship." Naturally, from those who are pursuing the same policy themselves. The Congress was turned into a British-French imperialist demonstration on behalf of Versailles against Hitlerite Germany.

THE main resolution adopted at the Congress of the Second International contained one revealing new feature. A distinction of line is attempted to be drawn between those countries in which " democracy " still

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obtains, and the countries under fascism. In the former the line must still be the line of " pure " democracy and the mythical advance through the ballot-box to socialism. But in the latter the line can inevitably only be that of " revolutionary struggle " ; and the revolution must set itself the aim, not merely to restore " pure " democracy and thereafter await patiently the hypothetical majority for socialism, but at once to destroy the great capitalist and landowning forces " and " lay the foundations of the new social order."

> Where the bourgeoisie has renounced democracy in order to throw itself into the arms of Fascism, and has deprived the working class of the democratic means of struggle, the only means of emancipation left is that of the revolutionary struggle.
>
> In the countries in which Fascism has prevailed, the dictatorship can only be overthrown by a revolution of the people. When they have gained their victory over Fascism, the revolutionary forces will not confine themselves to breaking its power ; they will destroy the great capitalist and land-owning forces which are its economic foundation.

BY this declaration the whole line of the 1918 Revolution, of Weimar democracy is implicitly condemned. In the controversy of those days between Kautsky and Lenin, between the line that the revolutionary working class in the moment of victorious overthrow of the old regime must confine itself to setting up " pure " democracy and then await a majority in the Constituent Assembly or parliament before proceeding further, and the line that the revolutionary working class in the moment of victory must at once use its power, without waiting for parliamentary majorities, to overthrow capitalism, the Second International is now compelled, fifteen years late, in a half-hidden unclear fashion, to admit that Lenin was right. The revolutionary working class in the moment of overthrow of the old regime must at once, without waiting for Constituent Assemblies or parliamentary majorities, proceed to " destroy the great capitalist and landowning forces." Excellent. If this were seriously meant, it would mean the workers' dictatorship. But in fact this phrase—thrown in as a sop because in Germany to-day it would be

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impossible to advocate any more return to the completely exposed Weimar democracy—is used as a fine-sounding phrase without any attempt to face what it practically involves. And—notable precaution—it is to be applied only to countries where Fascism has already conquered. Thus the working class must first be bull-dosed by democracy, paralysed and divided by reformism, smashed and butchered by fascism. Then, when their forces have been thus thoroughly broken up and weakened, they are graciously permitted by the Second Internatioanl to carry through the socialist revolution. But where " democracy " still exists, they must still tread the fatal path of " pure " democracy, abstaining from any revolutionary initiative, until fascism has conquered them. Such are the final confusions and contortions of the leadership of the Second International in the present epoch.

THE most significant manifestation of the new tendencies in the Second International following the victory of fascism in Germany is the emergency of the fascist wing or " Neo-Socialism." The differences between " Neo-Socialism " and the dominant leadership of the Second International have been exaggerated. In fact the Neo-Socialists only state more explicitly and with more uncompromising frankness what is already the practice and practical tendency of the leadership of Social-Democracy. Their programme demands the jettisoning of Marxist illusions of the possibility of victory of a proletarian party ; the necessity of closer approximation to the petit-bourgeoisie ; the necessity of adopting a frankly " national " policy (*i.e.*, unity of the workers in each country with " their own " capitalists) ; the necessity of revision of parliament and strengthening of the executive, of subordinating parliamentarism to the principles of " order " and " authority," &c. All this is the familiar type of a national-socialist or fascist programme. The " purity " of Blum's " socialism " is profoundly shocked at this frankness. But in the end the divisions are repeatedly reconciled. For this is in fact the direction in which Social-Democracy is travelling.

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SIMILARLY in the Labour Party the Socialist League Cripps-Cole school of so-called " dictatorship " (actually, strengthened executive powers within the capitalist state machine) gathers increasing support. The Socialist League advocates demand the revision of parliamentarism, strengthened executive powers, emergency powers, &c., in order, as they urge, to counter the fascist danger and carry through nominally " socialist " legislation. By this propaganda they are in fact sharpening a knife to be used against the workers. For their proposals are proposals entirely within the existing capitalist state machine. But this is already the whole tendency of capitalism, to diminish the rôle of parliament, to increase the executive, administrative and emergency powers; this is the tendency of the National Government; this is an essential part of the road to the fascist dictatorship. The dreams of " socialism " along this road will never materialise; but the strengthened capitalist dictatorship most certainly will. The differences between the old and new schools in the Labour Party, between Citrine and Cripps, are in fact, superficial. The old school looks still to the old standardised methods of social-democracy, to deceive the workers through parliament and strangle the working-class organisations from within; the newer school sees the necessity in the present intensified crisis and class struggle, to use stronger methods, to establish special emergency powers in order to maintain the existing state. Once again practice will reconcile the differences; for the tendency of the Labour Party leadership accords with the present tendencies of capitalism.

WHAT is clear beyond dispute is the present tendency of capitalism to intensified dictatorship, to intensified attack upon the workers, to growing war-preparations, to fascism. What is equally clear is that the only line to meet these is the line of the united working-class front. The Labour Party and trade union leadership, by rejecting the united working-class front, by concentrating their attack upon Communism and upon the militant workers, are in fact

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directly aiding the fascist offensive. This is to repeat the fatal line followed in Germany. But with the lesson of Germany before our eyes, we cannot let this same process repeat itself in Britain. We must build the united working-class front in time. The issues are so clear, the example of Germany is so clear, that the majority of the workers can and must be won in time. We must build the united revolutionary party; we must build the militant movements in the trade unions; we must build the militant working-class front of struggle against the present attacks of capitalism, which are the preparatory measures of the advance to fascism and to war. We must break through the sophistries of the Labour Party and trade union leadership about "democracy" and "dictatorship," and show where the plain line of struggle lies of the workers against capitalism. Along this line, and along this line alone, we can prevent fascism, and advance to the workers' dictatorship, which events show ever more clearly as the only final solution of the issues of the present period.

R. P. D.

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DICTATORSHIP AT BRIGHTON AND HASTINGS

By J. R. CAMPBELL

THE attitude of the reformist Labour Movement to Fascism and War was the subject of important debates at the Trades Union Congress in Brighton and will be the subject of important debates at the Labour Party Conference in Hastings.

The questions raised are of the utmost importance to the workers. The danger of War is growing so visibly, that the press of the capitalist class has long since ceased to discuss whether another War will soon break out, and is now discussing when and under what conditions the War will break out.

The Fascist dictatorship in Austria is preparing a smashing blow at the working class in that country, and the militant working class in every country is watching the situation anxiously, at the moment when the rise of the revolutionary movement within Germany gives the lie to those who declared that Hitler had decisively defeated the working class.

If the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference were really debating those tremendous questions, with a view to critically examining their own policy in the light of events, it would be a matter for congratulation. If, on the contrary, the whole meaning of the events is being distorted, in order to justify the continuation of a policy which in other countries has proved disastrous, then a crime of unparalleled magnitude is being committed against the working class.

The whole reformist attitude is summed up in three documents, which deserve to be explained and exposed again and again. The first is the General Council's Memorandum on " Dictatorship and the Trade Union Movement," the second, Citrine's speech at Brighton, a thoroughly philistine effort which the " New Clarion " has preserved for the hatred and contempt of future generations of workers, and the third the Labour Party Executive's Report to the Hastings Conference.

No more shattering condemnation can be found of the Brighton Trades Union Congress than the fact that the General Council's Report on " Dictatorship and the Trade Union Movement " evoked admiration. It is a document openly displaying the grossest defeatism in the history of the Trade Union movement. No other trade union leadership in

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the world, except that of the American Federation of Labour, could have produced such a mixture of monumental ignorance, philistine self-conceit and open prostration before the capitalist class.

This report consists of eleven closely printed pages. It purports to explain the rise of Fascism in Germany, but nowhere is the rôle of the German capitalist class mentioned. Indeed, capitalism, and the class struggle have no place in this analysis. Instead, we have political parties operating as if they had no class basis, majority and minority opinions, but the class struggle never. We shall see there is every reason why the reformists should approach the subject in this Liberal philistine manner.

Running through the whole report there is one yellow defeatist thread. Fascism, it is contended, is a product of the crisis. As the crisis develops Fascism grows stronger and the working class grows weaker. If the crisis continues to grow in Great Britain it is probable that Fascism will triumph here also.

" The one factor common to those countries (the countries of the Fascist dictatorship and ourselves) apart from what is probably a temporary disappointment on the part of a number of people with regard to the working of parliamentary institutions, is economic depression and unemployment. These no doubt tend to create a position favourable to Fascism. If economic conditions were to deteriorate to a greater extent it is impossible to say what might happen." (General Council's Report.)

" The only real common factor in the whole situation is this. In Great Britain, just as in Germany, we have a serious unemployment problem. If unemployment gets more desperate neither myself, nor any member of the General Council will be prepared to answer for the consequences." (Citrine's speech.)

In other words, the more the breakdown of capitalism manifests itself in growing unemployment, hunger and misery, the weaker the workers must necessarily become, and the easier it is for the capitalist class to develop a mass Fascist movement and suppress the working class.

Not only so, but the picture is painted that the more capitalism impoverishes the middle class, the more the middle class will necessarily aid capitalism against the working class. Citrine says:

" We must remember that as a consequence of the inflation of 1923-24 practically the whole of the savings of the middle classes of Germany were wiped out. Fortunes which had been carefully built up were wiped away because the mark was valueless, and the Government seized its opportunity to pay off the National Debt.

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"Some would have thought that this would have created a solidarity between the German middle classes and the working classes, because there is a school of thought which teaches—erroneously in my view—that as misery increases so does working class solidarity increase.

"But what happened in Germany. A deepened hostility took place between the middle classes and the working classes. The middle classes saw their enemies in the Trade Unions and Socialist forces, which all along had been working consistently internationally to raise the standard of life of the German people as a whole and to gain more equitable treatment for them.

"The German middle classes were divided from the working classes and the working classes were divided amongst themselves."—(Citrine's opening Speech).

Where the argument of the reformists leads it is clear. It is impossible, they say, in a period of deepening crisis, for the working class to find a revolutionary way out by overthrowing the capitalist class. We are not in a revolutionary period but in a counter-revolutionary period, where the working class is fighting a losing defensive battle. The only way out of this situation is for the working class to co-operate with the capitalist class in seeking a way of lessening the crisis within the capitalist system. That is the whole gospel of reformism.

Yet a slight glimpse of the truth is given. The split in the working class movement is admitted. Why was that movement split? It was split because the German reformists wanted to continue support to a War that the German masses were turning against. It was split because the German reformists after the revolt of the masses had given them full power, worked unceasingly to prevent the revolution developing in a Socialist direction, and in favour of the restoration of German capitalism.

The reformists busied themselves in rebuilding the German army as an instrument against the workers, using the old Prussian officer caste for that purpose. In the process of capitalist restoration they killed 15,000 revolutionary workers, they co-operated with the capitalist class in putting through the inflation policy whose results Citrine has so graphically detailed, they helped to fasten the yoke of the Versailles Treaty upon the backs of the German workers.

But they could do nothing else, argued Otto Bauer at the Second International Conference. The General Staffs of the whole of the Allied forces were against them. Yes, and the General Staffs of the whole of the Allied forces were against the Soviet Union, but the Soviet Union triumphed. The German Revolution was not isolated in 1918. The whole of Europe up to the French frontier was in the rapids of revolution. Austria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, were all in the

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grip of the mighty mass movement of the workers, and the forces of the Allied General Staffs were honeycombed with discontent. Partial mutiny after mutiny followed the Armistice. Not a couple of complete Army Corps from the Allied forces in France could be found trustworthy enough for a campaign against Russia. Mighty strikes were shaking Britain from top to bottom. A German Revolution driving to Socialism would have had millions of allies behind the front of the victorious powers.

But the German reformists preferred co-operation with the Generals of the Kaiser, preferred to intensify the split in the German Labour Movement.

The result was that the German workers movement split by the policy of class co-operation was unable to exert its revolutionary influence on the peasantry and on the middle-class of the towns. What did those elements get from the co-operation of the Social Democrats with German capitalism. They got inflation, they got national humiliation, they got mass unemployment. Not the oratory of Hitler but the class co-operation policy of the Social Democrats, turned them decisively against the workers. And the lesson is not that the workers cannot win big sections of the middle-class for a policy of struggle against the capitalist system which is crushing them, but that the class co-operation policy, by splitting the ranks of the working class, by aiding the capitalist class at the expense of workers and middle-class alike, can only antagonise the middle-class and prepare the way for Fascism.

The Trades Union Congress, having decided that the only thing to do was to help the capitalist class to escape from the crisis, not only praised Roosevelt but supported its General Secretary when he advocated an inflation policy for Great Britain. As this illuminating episode has not received the attention it deserved it will be useful to emphasise the details.

Two small unions had resolutions on the Congress Agenda protesting against any attempt to raise the price level unless wages were also raised. Their spokesman protested particularly against the following passage in the General Council's memorandum to the National Government on the World Economic Conference: "We have also stated repeatedly that equilibrium cannot be restored by reducing wages and we have advocated the alternative policy of raising the world's price level." Elsewhere in the memorandum the means of doing this are indicated, viz., (1) "a liberal credit policy, and (2) State financed public works" in short, inflation.

This policy was most emphatically defended by Citrine:

> "Wholesale prices," he said, "were about the pre-war level, while the level of wages was about 50 or 60 per cent. above pre-war level. Retail prices were about 40 per cent. above pre-war level.

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> "Until there was an appreciation in the wholesale price level Unemployment would not materially decrease and wages would not rise."

Yet, if this policy is operated and the middle-class is impoverished as it is bound to be—we presume that Citrine will explain that their enmity to the Unions which have advocated this policy, is a law of nature, and is in no wise due to the policy the Union leaders have pursued.

The whole of Citrine's speech and the General Council's memorandum are full of a desperate anxiety to sidetrack the issue. A great deal of space is wasted contrasting the difference between the situation of the working class under parliamentary democracy (the concealed dictatorship of the capitalist class) and under open Fascist dictatorship. A great deal of rhetoric is expended on the assumption that some person, or persons unknown, have been asking respectable ex-Ministers of the King like Mr. Henderson and Mr. Clynes, and perfect middle-class gentlemen like Mr. Walkden, to give up the belief in democracy that, being members of the Great British Race, they have been endowed with from birth.

Now nobody is asking these gentlemen any such thing. What the active man and woman in the Labour Party and Trade Unions are asking them is: "How can we fight against Fascism." Citrine devoted precisely three minutes to this question at the end of a long speech. The General Council devotes one paragraph out of forty-six in the entire memorandum to the same question as the following quotations show:

> What is the reply the Trade Union Movement must make? First, a re-affirmation of our belief in democracy, which is not such a trifling subject as some people would imagine.
>
> We have to show that it means not only slavery of the intellect but ultimately slavery of the working class people of this country. Let us keep our vision straight ahead.—(Citrine's Speech).
>
> The General Council have considered the question of organising a campaign against Fascism, and in defence of the principles of democracy. Such a campaign in their view, should aim at more than a series of mass meetings to protest against Fascism. It should be an educational effort, by means of meetings, outdoor gatherings, debates, leaflets and pamphlets, in which the true character of Fascism as an undemocratic movement should be exposed, its methods of organisation explained; its achievements criticised.—(General Council's Memorandum).

That is the main line of the reformists—a propaganda campaign. But did the German Social Democrats with hundreds of newspapers at their disposal, with 4,000,000 trade union members, with a huge network of clubs and cultural and sports associations, such as the British Labour Movement does not possess—did this Social Democracy conduct no campaign? Of course it did. Yet Fascism came because its campaign of words was contradicted by its deeds.

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During the debate Aneurin Bevan, the "left" M.P., argued that the best way to bar the route to Fascism was for the Trade Union Movement to adopt a militant policy. "Let us get down to an industrial policy, demand increases in wages and press the attack home." Now something very like this is said in the resolution of the Labour and Socialist International passed at Paris in August, the representatives of the British reformists assenting :—

> The working class must never forget that Democracy will not retain its hold over the people or protect them against the lying demagogy of Fascism unless it demonstrates by vigorous action that it is capable of protecting the people against Capitalism, of fighting against unemployment, and thus of taking the initiative in preparing the realisation of Socialism.

But it is one thing demagogically to call for "vigorous action" in Paris. It is another thing to organise it in Britain. So according to the *Daily Herald* report "He (Citrine) said they could not ask millions of people to fight unless they could hold out some prospective result of that fight. Was Mr. Bevan convinced that in the industrial situation of the last three or four years, a strike of that character, would have had tangible results in raising the standard of life of the people ?"

But five minutes after Citrine has "proved" that a strike under present circumstances is futile the Congress passes a resolution that: "in the event of any attempt to supersede democratic institutions, to take all possible steps—including the formulation of plans for industrial action to combat this menace." But German Social Democracy also formulated plans for industrial action. What happened to them was vividly described like this by Citrine.

"All I can say is that a general strike was definitely planned and projected, but the German leaders had to give consideration to the fact that a General Strike after the atmosphere created by the Reichstag fire and with $6\frac{1}{4}$ million people unemployed was an act fraught with the gravest consequences, consequences which might be described as nothing less than Civil War. I hope to God we are never put into a similar position." Here is an almost incredible confession of the whole bankruptcy of the reformist position. For years those gentlemen have told us that it was possible to attain Socialism by peaceful means. Now they tell us that Fascism is developing as a result of the capitalist crisis, that the workers should formulate plans for industrial action, and yet if they take that industrial action against Fascism, it may lead to civil war. Yet in the next breath they tell us go on believing in parliamentary democracy and the peaceful way to Socialism.

All the British reformists can do is to wail that all dictatorships are hostile to liberty. To whose liberty is the proletarian dictatorship hostile ?

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To the liberty of a capitalist class which has attempted to consolidate its position as a ruling class, by subjecting the workers to a terroristic Fascist despotism. Yes, we are hostile to the liberty of this class and whoever is not hostile to the liberty of propaganda and action of this class is hostile to the building up of a classless order of society. We are not in a debating society where we can " respect the convictions of those who do not agree with our policy." We are in a class war against a dangerous enemy who is out by means of political terrorism to hold us in economic slavery.

But the workers' dictatorship does not curb the liberty of the workers but extends it in an unheard of degree. If the delegates to the Hastings Conference are not prepared to listen to communist evidence on this question perhaps they will listen to those who have been the theoretical leaders of British reformism for two generations—Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

In their first impressions of the Soviet Union they stated " What is new to us is the very great variety of different forms of social organisation in which the vast population is enrolled. Instead of a single bureaucratic Governmental army embracing all persons, undertaking all functions and services required by the community, we find workers in numerous trade unions, shock brigades, shop committees, factory committees, district and all-union conferences.

" But workers are also consumers, and as consumers they are again organised into gigantic co-operative societies, the largest and most powerful the world has ever seen. And the worker who is also a consumer, is likewise a citizen interested in his village, his municipality, and finally the great Union of Socialist Soviet Republics." In another place Sidney Webb has said: " What is the common pattern on which all these columnar blocks are formed ? " (" Columnar blocks " are the mass organisations of unions, soviets and co-operatives, to which the Webbs refer above.) " At the base of each block is an enormous and literally uncounted number of small electoral meetings—something like a hundred thousand in the U.S.S.R.—in each shop or section, team or shift in a factory; in each branch or department of a hospital or college or other institution; in each ship or regiment (have we got that in " democratic " Britain, Mr. Citrine ?—J.R.C.), each railway depot or oilworks, each electric plant or State farm, and likewise in each rural village—all these meetings of fellow workers electing annually their several committees and councils to manage, within these several spheres, their own local affairs. It is no small element in the essentially democratic character of these basic meetings that they are usually held every few weeks in order to hear the elected person's account of the work they have been doing; to

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address to them complaints and enquiries; and, if thought desirable, actually to "recall" them from office and elect others."

This is real democracy for the workers. And yet reformist philistines living in a country where in the majority of factories the workers dare not hold a meeting, where the press (even the daily Labour Press) is controlled by a handful of press Lords, where the monopoly of the best halls are in the hands of the capitalist class, where the Statute Book is littered with century old laws ready to be put into operation against the workers at a moment's notice, have the audacity to represent this rich and varied workers' democracy in the Soviet Union, as perhaps an advance on Tsarism but in nowise to be compared with the wonderful liberty that exists in Britain.

One of the reasons we are told why the advance of Fascism will be difficult in this country is that liberty is in the blood of the British people. But repression is second nature to our capitalist class. They are ruling over the greatest colonial Empire the world has ever seen by blood and iron. To talk about the liberal traditions of this class is humbug. The ruling class has had such experience in ruling by force. Every day that passes a punitive expedition is operating against the masses in some part of "our far flung Empire." That they have not had occasion to display to the full in Britain the terroristic tendencies they are constantly displaying in other parts of their Empire is due to historical causes. That they will be fully prepared to do so when necessary, their behaviour during the General Strike and the Hunger March abundantly testified.

Our reformists catch a glimpse of this at times. "If we go in for the methods of force," wails Citrine, "we will be badly beaten. The Russian Revolution gave the capitalists a great object lesson. They found how to keep power, even though one has not a majority of the people behind one. They have seen how the armed forces of this world have been concentrated until to-day they can be operated by a comparatively few trusted people."

Against this Citrine argues "democracy has only one weapon." But what it is he does not say, because his argument leads to the conclusion that not only is force futile but voting is equally futile for have not the capitalist class learned "how to keep power, even if one has not a majority of the people behind one. They have concentrated their armed forces in the hands of a comparatively few trusted people."

So after proclaiming that they will use the General Strike against Fascism, after admitting that the General Strike may be fraught with the consequences of civil war, the reformists assert that in civil war the workers are bound to be beaten. The logical conclusion from this policy

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is to abandon any pretence of organising the real struggle against Fascism, to surrender to capitalism and to hope that in some way a trade revival will come along and save us from the worst.

That was the policy of Brighton. It will be the policy of Hastings. The workers of the Labour Party must seriously examine this policy. It gives them no line of fight against Fascism. The main line of fight against Fascism is not propaganda—although if propaganda is conducted on real working-class lines that is useful—it is not the propaganda of a General Strike in the future, it is the daily building of the united front of the workers now, in the struggle for a ten per cent. wage increase, for work schemes, against the Means Test, etc. It is this daily fight—which the leaders seek to prevent—that alone holds forth the possibility of arresting the growth of the Fascist mass movement, and of enabling the workers continually to develop the struggle to a higher plane. It is the leadership of this mass struggle by a revolutionary party that will enable the working class to win the preponderance of force to its side, to smash attempts to set up a Fascist dictatorship and to set up the rule of the working class.

We do not say that any very big move in this direction is to be expected from the Hastings Conference, but a step forward will be made if Labour Party militants up and down the country will realise that the policy of Brighton was a policy of surrender to Fascism, and that the policy of Hastings is a continuation of that of Brighton.

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THE ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ

By R. BRIDGEMAN

(Secretary of the League against Imperialism)

THE Assyrian question deserves the closest study, because apart from the immediate life and death issues, it throws light on the whole problem of racial minorities and the imperialist rôle of the League of Nations through its Permanent Mandates Commission.

The Assyrian population in Iraq at the present day numbers about 25,000. At the end of July, 1,300 Assyrians under the tribal chieftain, Yaku, who had crossed into French Syria were disarmed by the French authorities. Shortly afterwards they attempted to re-cross the Tigris fully armed: they were met by an Iraqi force which refused to allow them to re-enter Iraq unless they surrendered their arms. This the Assyrians refused to do because they were afraid of the Kurds, who were encamped on the opposite bank of the river.

The Assyrians who are a Christian sect, had entered Syrian territory as a protest against the detention of their religious leader, the Nestorian Patriarch, Mar Shimun, because he had declined to sign a declaration of loyalty and to forswear interference with the settlement scheme which was being operated by the Iraqi Government in accordance with the recommendations of the League of Nations. Had the Assyrians accepted the proffered settlement they would have found themselves scattered over very wide areas and deprived of anything in the nature of nationhood.

In August it was reported that at Simel, 40 miles north of Mosul, 700 Assyrian villagers had been killed, and that many Assyrian villages had been burnt. It was clear that the responsibility for these outrages rested with the Government of Iraq, but it appeared that while Iraq troops had been despatched against the Assyrian rebels, Kurdish irregulars had actually put the Assyrians to death.

These occurrences seemed to cause consternation in Britain because throughout the British occupation of Iraq the Assyrians had been treated by the British as their close allies; they had been enrolled in the famous Assyrian levies, and these levies had been used particularly to guard the aerodromes when British aeroplanes were assisting the Iraq troops to put down Kurdish revolts, notably those of Sheikh Mahmoud and of Sheikh Ahmed of Barzan.

There had in fact been some very disturbing accounts of the devastation wrought by the R.A.F. in Kurdish villages as a result of revolts of

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the Kurds which it was believed in some quarters that the Bagdad Government had done a lot to provoke, while it was still under the control of the British mandate.

The peculiar ferocity displayed by the Kurds against the Assyrians in August had the appearance of retaliation for the devastation of their villages by British aeroplanes, whose aerodromes had been for so long guarded by the Assyrian levies, so that the Assyrians had become identified with the British by the Kurds.

The situation was grave enough to cause the British Prime Minister to interrupt his holiday in Scotland and to come to London to discuss the situation with the British Ambassador to Iraq before the latter's return by air to Bagdad. King Feisal of Iraq, who was doing a cure in Europe, was recalled to Iraq owing to the gravity of the events.

On the termination of the British mandate when Iraq was about to be admitted to the League of Nations, Sir Francis Humphreys, the British High Commissioner, who was to become the first British Ambassador to Iraq, declared at Geneva: "If the Government of Iraq is not in a position to fulfil its undertakings towards the Assyrian minority, then Great Britain will consider it its duty to defend this minority and it will offer it the hand of friendship."

In considering how the races formerly subject to the Turkish Empire have been treated, under the authority of the League of Nations, since the dissolution of the Turkish Empire, especially in the light of the problems which have arisen in connection with the racial minorities, *e.g.*, Jews, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Kurds, it is useful to recall how the peoples formerly subject to Tsarist Russia were being dealt with during the same epoch, bearing in mind that there are within the territory of the Soviet Union some 167 peoples, speaking over 200 languages and dialects.

The Second Soviet Congress in October, 1917, which overthrew the Kerensky administration, proclaimed "the right of the people of Russia to self-determination, including separation and the formation of independent states," and the "Declaration of the rights of the toiling and exploited people," published in 1918, left it "to the free decision of the workers and peasants of each nationality through the powers of their Soviet Congress to decide whether and in what form they will participate in the Federal Central Government and other Federal Soviet organs."

Many nations had been conquered by the Turks. These subject peoples, both in Europe and in Asia, were in constant rebellion against Ottoman imperialism. It was the policy of Constantinople to play one subject people against another, just as it is the policy of France to-day to play off the Maronites against the Druses and of Britain to support

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the Zionist Jews against the Arabs. During the war these subject peoples, like the Assyrians, and the majority of the Arabs, joined the Allies and fought the Turks in the expectation of gaining national independence. But, while as the result of the October Revolution nationalities formerly subject to Tsarist imperialism like the Kazaks, Uzbegs, Bashkirs, Tartars, Yakuts, Karels, Udmurts, Chuvashes, and others, were able to have their own State units and as members of the Soviet Union to enter upon independent economic and cultural development, and while other nationalities like the Poles, Finns, Letts, and Esthonians, which under the Tsarist Empire were doomed to extinction and assimilation, have determined to establish full national independence, although they have preferred not to enter the Soviet Union, the Arabs, Jews, Assyrians, Chaldeans and Kurds have found that instead of achieving the independence they desired, they are still under alien tutelage, a tutelage in fact of a two-fold character where the mandatory system operates.

For some 25 centuries the Assyrians had lived in the Hakhiari mountain district of Turkey, engaged principally in keeping sheep, and it has been said in British liberal circles, which feel a religious sympathy with these puritan Nestorian Christians, that the Commission of the League of Nations, which delimited the Iraq-Turkish frontier in 1925, made a mistake when it included the Assyrian plateau in Turkish territory.

What the League Commission actually wrote regarding the Assyrians in its report in 1925 was: "There is no doubt that this people rose in armed revolt against its lawful Government at the instigation of foreigners (Russia) and without any provocation on the part of the Turkish authorities."

Not only did the Turks flatly refuse to allow the Assyrians to return to Turkish territory, but they deported with ruthless severity a number who had returned in the autumn of 1925, and in 1928 the Iraqi government was informed that any Assyrians attempting to enter Turkey would be arrested and punished.

Turkey has got rid of her Christian population, the Armenians, by expulsion and the Greeks by exchange, she has made it clear that she will in no circumstances give hospitality to the Assyrians, who quitted Turkish territory during the war, and she has filled up the vacancies in her Eastern territory caused by her displacement of the Armenians by the introduction of 100,000 Turkish peasants from Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.

The Assyrians are as discontented under Arab rule as they were under Turkish rule, for all that the Iraqi Government offers them are areas of settlement so widely scattered that the possibility of preserving their national entity would be permanently destroyed if they accepted the offer. The Mar Shimun definitely rejected it. Syria might present a

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solution. There are said to be 300 empty villages there, and it is the policy of the French Government as the Mandatory Power to give hospitality to refugees, especially if they are correligionaries. Two years ago, for instance, France, with the approval of the League of Nations, encouraged the settlement of Armenians in Syria. The Assyrians appeared to be inclined to move into Syria and settle there.

It was in 1919 that the administration of Syria passed from the British to the French. At first the French had planned to rule Syria as a colony by means of a federation of its States, when this was seen to be impracticable they favoured a united Syria under French direction. There have been a number of revolts against the French rule, culminating in the great insurrection at Damascus in 1925 which was only repressed after the city had been subjected to a six-months' bombardment.

Apart from its strategic position the importance of Syria as a cotton-growing country is increasing. Then there is the new pipe-line conducting the oil from the Mosul field to Tripolis. France is not anxious to bring her mandate to an end and looks with suspicion on the policy of her British rival in terminating the mandate over Iraq.

The attitude of the Franco-Syrian authorities in the Assyrian complication seems at first sight difficult to understand. The Government of Iraq addressed a report on the subject to the League of Nations protesting against the attitude of the French authorities towards the Assyrians who had crossed into Syria and alleging that facilities were accorded to them for making Syrian territory a base of operations against Iraq.

The French Government has disclaimed any action of this kind and the whole question will be the subject of an exhaustive enquiry and will come before the next Council Meeting of the League of Nations.

It may be the intention and purpose both of French and British Imperialism to keep their colonial possessions—and mandated Syria and Iraq nominally independent, are still in reality under the imperialist control of France and Britain respectively—it may be the intention to keep up an effervescence among the different peoples in this subject territory, in order to make unity more difficult.

Until the end of the Great War the Mosul Vilayet was ruled by Turkey, its inhabitants being a mixture of races amongst whom the Arabs were in a minority, but it is to be remembered that the Turks acknowledged and preserved the unity of and dealt with these different races through their own heads—Patriarchs, Mullahs, Sheikhs.

By 1918 the British had replaced the Turks as the rulers of the country, and the former experienced considerable difficulty in preserving law and order and were obliged to concentrate a very large garrison in

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the country. There could be no question of the annexation of Mesopotamia by Britain and so the British Government began, with the approval of the League of Nations, to consider the problem of establishing a kingdom of Iraq under the mandatory system, and in June 1920 announced the intention to establish a distinct Arab Government under an Arab ruler. A provisional Government was formed under the Naqib of Baghdad, which was to be replaced by a Government based on an elected Assembly under an Arab ruler acceptable to the Assembly. On August 23, 1932, the British High Commissioner, Sir Percy Cox, proclaimed the Emir Feisal, King of Iraq, by election of the people, as a result of a plebiscite in which 96 per cent. of the inhabitants voted in his favour.

With the announcement of the intention of the British Government to recommend Iraq for membership of the League of Nations the outlook for the Assyrians changed for the worse. The prospect of independence for Iraq alarmed the Assyrians, who addressed protests to the British, and when the terms of the proposed Anglo-Iraq Treaty were published, it was found not to contain any express provision for the protection of minorities. The Treaty which so much disturbed the Assyrians was signed by the British Labour Government on June 30, 1930, and Iraq was accepted as a member of the Assembly of the League on October 3, 1932. In the course of the discussions of the Assyrian question at Geneva the Italian representative emphasised the fact that the Assyrians placed their faith in the British Government and in the League, and he recalled the British declaration that in recommending Iraq's admission to the League it regarded itself as "morally responsible." Sir John Simon said that the British Government was well aware of the difficulties of the Assyrians, who "had been housed, fed and clothed for years at the expense of the British Government."

A series of petitions were addressed by the Assyrians to the League of Nations. One of these requested that the Assyrians should be recognised as a "millet" or nation domiciled in Iraq and that the region from which they came in Turkey should be returned to them to be included within the Iraq boundaries. Another petition from the Patriarch Mar Shimun placed on the League the responsibility for seeing that the Assyrians should be accommodated in the Mosul area on the ground that the League had created the existing situation by its agreement with the allotment of the Hakhiari province to Turkey in 1925.

The advice given to the Assyrians by Britain was to the effect that they should become "good and loyal citizens of the Iraqi State," and during the present summer a British officer, Major Thompson, has been busily engaged in endeavouring to effect Assyrian settlement, work in which

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the Mar Shimun refused to co-operate, and in this attitude of non-co-operation the Assyrian tribal leader, Yaku, supported the Mar Shimun.

In December, 1932, the Council of the League of Nations had passed a resolution adopting the view of the Permanent Mandates Commission that the demand of the Assyrians for administrative autonomy within Iraq could not be accepted.

The Council of the League also " noted with satisfaction " the intention of the Iraqi Government to " select from outside Iraq a foreign expert to assist them for a limited period in the settlement of all landless inhabitants of Iraq, including Assyrians, and in the carrying out of their scheme for the settlement of the Assyrians in Iraq, under suitable conditions, and, so far as might be possible, in homogeneous units, it being understood that the existing rights of the present population shall not be prejudiced."

If these measures did not provide a complete solution of the problem and there remained Assyrians unwilling or unable to settle in Iraq, the Council trusted to the Iraqi Government to take all possible measures to facilitate the settlement of such Assyrians elsewhere.

The position in the Middle East is clearly profoundly influenced by imperialist intrigue. More than ever are the imperialist countries intensifying their policy of colonial expansion. The bifurcated pipe-line testifies to the existence of jealousies regarding the oil supply. Iraq has been bound to the British Empire by a military alliance. The Arabs are split into a number of different countries, so that their union against imperialism is difficult of accomplishment.

Fascism is developing among the Feudalists and the bourgeoisie of Iraq just as it is developing among the Zionist Jews of Palestine.

In some quarters it is believed that the Mar Shimun, whose Nestorian Christians have been the object of special interest on the part of the Archbishop of Canterbury, is himself a British agent, and that the British Government has sent him to Cyprus to await a favourable moment for a come-back, when he can be of use to imperialism again.

The masses of the workers in the Arab lands, now under the heel of imperialism, have need of the class support of their fellow-workers in Europe, in the common struggle against Fascism and imperialism.

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DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM AND COMMUNISM

By L. RUDAS

[*With this month is concluded the contribution, commenced last month, drawing together the Discussion of Dialectical Materialism, which has been proceeding in the* LABOUR MONTHLY[1] *since the May issue, in the form of a reply to E. F. Carritt by L. Rudas of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute.*]

LET us now consider Mr. Carritt's second objection—as to the alleged " vitalism " of Engels—and his misinterpretation of the dialectical method as " a vitalist method outside biology."

> " Dialectical materialism," argues Mr. Carritt, " looks like vitalism applied to physics and to society as well as life. . . . It applies a vitalist method outside biology." (p.391.)

This objection of Mr. Carritt's is closely connected with his inability to understand the dialectical conception of development. According to dialectical materialism development does not consist in the *gradual* growth or the *gradual* diminution of the old. The way capitalism develops into communism, for instance, is not (as, by the way, " constructive Socialism " would try to persuade us), that oppression continually decreases while democracy continually increases, until capitalism almost imperceptibly passes into Socialism—one fine day we wake up and find ourselves in Socialism. No, in reality the development proceeds quite differently : the gradual nature of the development only prepares the way for the interruption of gradual succession, for revolutionary leaps which necessarily take place at certain *nodal points* of the development. As a result of this revolutionary, discontinuous, in short, dialectical development, there then arises something *really new*, something which is not the mere continuation of the old but which means the destruction of the old and the sudden appearance of something really essentially new. The social revolution is only a special case of such a revolutionary leap, and its result, Communism, is not the continuation of capitalism, with its " bad " sides removed and its " good " ones developed, but something that has never hitherto existed in human history : a classless society based on the high degree of development attained under capitalism by the material productive forces of human society.

[1]See May and June, No. 5 and 6, pp. 324-329 and 383-391, for E. F. Carritt's article, and July and August, No. 7 and 8, pp. 441-452 and 503-511 for various contributions to the discussion of this article.

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If the Marxist-Leninist theory of the social revolution is entirely based on the recognition of this discontinuous development—(a further proof that dialects and Communism are most intimately connected!)—the realisation is also gaining ground in natural science that the old rule which prevailed almost exclusively for centuries, that *natura non facit saltus* [" nature makes no leaps "] is false, for nature is continually making leaps, the process of nature involves as many leaps as the process of society. What else is the quantum theory but a recognition that the process of nature involves leaps ? What is the modern theory of light, with its conception of light as *at once* wave and corpuscle, other than a sign that dialectic is penetrating natural science, which can no longer get on without the dialectical conception of natural processes ? Natural science, which for a long time almost exclusively took only the continuity of natural processes into consideration, is being gradually forced by the weight of facts into a dialectical understanding of the unity of continuity and discontinuity in natural processes. It is still far from its goal, it still clings to the old traditional methods of thought and neither can nor will consciously apply dialectic as a method (to say nothing of the fact that many natural scientists, from social causes, are adherents of idealist metaphysics), but once the bonds of social prejudice which hold it fettered are broken, its development is leading it towards dialectical materialism.

From this dialectical conception of development follows the other assertion maintained by dialectical materialism, namely, that in objective reality there exist different systems of laws which are as much interconnected, and therefore *continuous*, as they are distinct from one another and therefore *discrete*. Thus Engels says :

> If I call physics the mechanics of the molecule, chemistry the physics of the atom, and then further biology the chemistry of albumen, I am trying by this means to express the transition of these sciences one into the other and therefore as much their interconnection or continuity as their difference or discreteness. (*Dialectics of Nature.*)

There are mechanical, physical, chemical, biological and social systems of law. The sequence given here expresses a *hierarchy* at the same time, since each successive unity is not only qualitatively different, but also *higher* than the preceeding one. The discreteness of these systems of law is expressed in their qualitative difference, their continuity, in the fact that each higher system contains the lower laws within itself as subordinate elements.[2] Thus life originated in the physico-chemical sphere, but life is at the same time something more than the physico-chemical processes, which are included in the life-process as subordinate processes. Albumen is undoubtedly a chemical product, but " if chemistry ever succeeds in producing albumen artificially, this albumen must

[2]It is impossible to translate the Hegelian-Marxian concept expressed in the German word *moment* adequately into English ; we here use " element."

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show the phenomena of life, however weak these may be" (Engels). For:

> "Life, the mode of existence of albuminous substances, consists primarily in the fact that at each moment it is itself and at the same time something else; and this does not take place as the result of a process to which it is subjected from without, as might also occur in the case of inanimate bodies. On the contrary, life, the exchange of matter which takes place through nutrition and excretion, is a self-completing process, which is inherent in and native to its medium, albumen, without which it cannot exist." (Engels, *Anti-Duhring*.)

Despite the risk that Mr. Carritt will accuse us of swearing by every word uttered by the master, we have here described in Engels' own words what, according to dialectical materialism, the specific character of the life-process, in relation to the purely physico-chemical processes included within it, consists in. And what here applies to life applies equally, for instance, to social processes in their relation to biological processes. There can be no social process without human beings and therefore without living beings and therefore without biological processes. But the biological processes of human beings are not only subordinated to the social processes, they are at the same time essentially modified by them. Take for instance the development of the species "man," that is the development of his organs. Since man has lived in society the development of his organs has become almost negligible, it is insignificant in comparison to the development of the "artificial organs" of man, of his *productive forces*. The biological "struggle for existence" here changes into the class struggle. The "mechanists" of social science have nevertheless tried to represent the struggle for existence as the motive force of history. Such attempts were mercilessly ridiculed by Marx and Engels, since the law of the struggle for existence, which may be adequate as an explanation of the development of the species up to man, becomes an empty phrase if applied without further qualification to society, where specific laws arise and operate. The well known biologist, Professor L. Hogben, as a true mechanist, repeats the error of his predecessors and, as the reader will soon have the opportunity of convincing himself, assures us that "we can envisage the possibility that the methods of physical science will one day claim the whole field of what can properly be called knowledge." In the light of our explanation of the dialectical standpoint in this question, it is needless to point out that this view is nothing more than an illusion.

The dialectical conception outlined above is what Mr. Carritt chooses to call "a vitalist method outside biology," "applied to physics and to society as well as life." No doubt he bases this assertion on the superficial point of agreement that the real vitalists (who represent a *reactionary* tendency in biology) also defend the specific character of the life-process

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in relation to the physico-chemical processes involved in it. And as dialectical materialism emphasises this likewise, but further maintains in addition the specific character of physical processes in relation to mechanical ones, of chemical processes in relation to physical processes and finally, the specific character of the social process in relation to the biological process, therefore dialectical materialism is " vitalism applied to physics and to society as well as life." This analogy is surely worth about as much as that other one which describes Communists as the disciples of a new " Communistic religion " on the ground that they " believe in Communism."

Indeed, the difference between vitalism and dialectical materialism is the same as the difference between a religious sect and the Communist Party. Just as the religious sect takes the most unscientific phantasies, the crudest notions of primitive man as the basis of its faith, while the Communist bases himself upon the whole scientific experience of humanity, the highest achievements of science, so vitalism in biology is more or less skilfully disguised theology which, side by side with physico-chemical laws, adopts particular " life forces," non-material " entelechies," &c., and side by side with the biological laws of causation adopts a particular *teleology*. According to vitalism the physico-chemical processes of the living organism are only the instrument utilised by an alleged immaterial " life-principle " in order to realise its ends, which are independent of these processes and given in advance. It is easy to see that in the last resort this will culminate in the theory of free will and in the idealistic assertion of the priority of mind to matter. The main attempt to save by the aid of a mystified biology this prop of reaction, which the development of science has completely undermined, is indeed the admitted aim of all vitalism.

The fact that Mr. Carritt mixes up this arch-reactionary " theory " with dialectical materialism shows that he arms himself against our theory with very superficial analogies. (Indeed at another point he actually lumps us together, with Plato and the " entelechies " of Aristotle!) Dialectical materialism affirms the strictest causal development of the higher from the lower. Thus, it recognises a *higher synthesis* as a result of this development, but there is nothing mystical about this, as there is with the vitalists. Is there any mysticism in the fact that from unities already existing on lower levels unities are formed on higher levels? At every step practice proves to us that there exist unities, unions, which represent more than the sum of their parts. From atoms are formed molecules, from molecules chemical substances, micellæ, chromosomes, and other subordinate parts of the cell, then the cell itself as a unity, the multi-cellular organism, human society (class, state, family) —are not all of these unities of which each is more than the sum of its

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parts or components ? The simplest form of co-operation on the part of several human beings brings about results which can only be explained if the law by which quantity changes into quality is a real, actual and widely operative law of nature and society. Why then cannot life, although it originated in a physico-chemical way and consists in physico-chemical processes, be qualitatively more in its totality than the sum of these processes ? To give two examples : let us take first the relation of plane and solid geometry. Plane geometry is not capable of dealing with the relations of the special elements in three-dimensional bodies because it is limited to two dimensions. Three-dimensional space can only be dealt with by solid geometry. But the laws of plane geometry are in no way revoked by solid geometry, which includes them under its system as particular cases. In relation to physico-chemical laws the life-process represents as it were a new dimension, of which the laws must be established by experience.

Or take the case of magnetism and radio-activity. The English astronomer, Sir James Jeans, thinks it most remarkable that :

> The phenomenon of permanent magnetism appears in a tremendous degree in iron, and in a lesser degree in its neighbours, nickel and cobalt. The atoms of these elements have 26, 27 and 28 electrons respectively. The magnetic properties of all other atoms are almost negligible in comparison. Somehow, then, although again mathematical physics has not yet unravelled how, magnetism depends on the peculiar properties of the 26, 27 and 28 electron atoms, especially the first. Radio-activity provides a third instance, being confined, with insignificant exceptions, to atoms having from 83 to 92 electrons, again we do not know why.
>
> Thus chemistry can only tell us to place life in the same category as magnetism and radio-activity. The universe is built so as to operate according to certain laws. As a consequence of these laws, atoms having certain definite numbers of electrons, namely 6, 26 to 28, and 83 to 92, have certain special properties, which show themselves in the phenomena of life, magnetism and radio-activity respectively. (Jeans, " *The Mysterious Universe*," p. 11.)

This scientist, being philosophically a mystic and reactionary without the faintest notion of dialectic, scents a " mystery " here and bases a religious mysticism on these and similar facts. But the facts themselves are strictly scientific facts and only prove the truth of the saying of the dialectical materialist, Engels, that " nature is the proof of dialectics."

Of course it must always be carefully and scientifically established whether what we have before us is really a higher unity, a higher synthesis, and in what this synthesis consists. Here, in its application of the strictest scientific method, dialectical materialism differs from vitalism which, as we have already said, seeks the causes of the life-process in mystic, non-material forces. The entelechies and life-forces of the vitalists are only

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empty names, the refuge of ignorance and reactionary endeavours ; they block the path to real knowledge because, like every form of idealism, despite high-sounding words, they leave unsolved the problem to be solved. On the other hand, *without a recognition of the dialectical synthesis, of the formation of new and higher unities in nature and society, not a single real step can be taken in science.* Mr. Carritt, who brands the recognition of this synthesis by dialectical materialism as " vitalism " proceeds in a somewhat inconsistent way ; it was he himself who demanded that the contradictions of which we spoke should not remain in " mere juxtaposition " but should be united in a " higher synthesis." Now, when dialectical materialism fulfils this demand, he complains of " vitalism." Not a very consistent proceeding !

Mr. Carritt would indeed like to resolve the contradiction of mind and matter into a " higher synthesis," *i.e.*, to reduce matter as well as mind to a third something. But here dialectical materialism cannot oblige. Of course we fully recognise that this contradiction is as much purely relative as all the contradictory processes in the world (it has an *absolute* significance only within the boundaries of a very limited sphere—in this case exclusively within the limits of the fundamental epistemological question of what is to be considered primary and what secondary), but dialectical materialism will never transform its materialism (which admittedly consists, among other things, in the recognition that mind, thought, is a product of matter) into an eclecticism which, on the pretext of being equally superior to materialism and to idealism, really takes mind as the synthesis of matter and thought and so preaches idealism. Anyone who prefers the feeble, inconsistent, confused " philosophy " of eclecticism to the clear and consistent line of dialectical materialism on this question should apply to Mr. Bertrand Russell and not to Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Ignorance of dialectics, or the direct repudiation of the dialectical standpoint regarding the specific character of the life-process in relation to purely physico-chemical processes, deflect science from the correct path and even become a direct obstacle to its further development. This is shown by the fate of the opposite extreme to the vitalists in biology, the so-called mechanists. In their justifiable struggle against the vitalists, they empty out the baby with the bath and land in *behaviourism ;* in denying the specific character of the life process they end by denying thinking itself. Thus, Professor Hogben says :

> While possessing a greater range of reversible response than any living system, it would be difficult to specify in a living system any single activity which could not be reproduced by a mechanical system. (*Nature of Living Matter*, p. 83.)

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And in another place :

> A new school of psychologists has come into being with the express object of making psychology a physical science, relieving man, the celestial pilgrim, of his burden of Soul. . . . In the light of Pavlov's work we can invisage the possibility that the methods of physical science will one day claim the whole field of what can properly be called knowledge." (*Ibid*, p. 90.)

Even if we admit that every *single* activity of a living system could be reproduced by a " mechanical " (meaning, of course physico-chemical) system, does this prove anything against the specific character of the life-process *as a whole*, of the living organism *as a whole ?* This in the first place. Secondly, even a behaviourist like Mr. Hogben cannot deny that he possesses sensibility and " thinking." This sensibility and this thinking are certainly the product of physico-chemical, material, processes and indissolubly bound up with these processes. Anyone who disputes this is not a materialist, but an idealist. But anyone who supposes that consistent materialism only lies in denying the existence of thought is making a great mistake.[3] A problem is not solved by a denial that it exists. That is the well-known method of Machism, which wherever it is faced by a scientific problem still unsolved simply denies its existence. So the Machists obstinately denied the existence of atoms and ridiculed the atom-hypothesis. (The illustrious physicist, Boltzmann, was even driven into suicide by them for his consistent adherence to atomism.) But the recent development of natural science has, as is well known, decided against Machism. Because of its sterility, Machism, which is fond of calling itself positivism, has been justly described by a German author as negativism. Behaviourism, too, is nothing more than a similar ostrich policy of sticking one's head in the sands of denial in order to avoid seeing the enemy, the unsolved problem. Behaviourism is, of course, anything rather than materialism, fundamentally it is also a Machist form of agnosticism. On the pretext that we do not yet know what the connection is between the material and mental processes of a living organism it asserts that we also never can know it, and declares that mental processes do not exist, they are—an illusion. This " illusion " however *does exist* and requires an explanation. But the assertion of the behaviourists is, of course, not true ; one day we shall know what the connection between mental and material processes is. One of the paths to this knowledge is undoubtedly the most careful investigation of the physico-chemical processes here involved. But in denying that

[3]Mr. Bertrand Russell, who is himself an advocate of Machist " neutral monism," makes exactly this mistake when he gives the following misrepresentation of the standpoint of materialism :—" Popular metaphysics," he writes, " divides the known world into mind and matter and a human being into soul and body. Some—the materialists—have said that matter alone is real and *mind is an illusion*." (*Outline of Philosophy*, p. 303.) This is a complete misrepresentation even of the standpoint of older materialism, but does not in any case take into account the standpoint of modern, dialectical materialism.

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we have here a problem requiring an answer we are in practice hindering the development of science. The fact is that even the fullest knowledge of the physico-chemical processes in a living organism would be far from exhausting the question, as the dialectical materialist Engels long ago foresaw :

> *Mechanical Motion.* Among natural scientists movement is always understood as mechanical motion, change of place. This is a legacy from the pre-chemical eighteenth century and greatly impedes a clear conception of phenomena. Movement in application to matter is *change in general.* . . . This does not mean that each of the higher forms of movement is not always and necessarily connected with real mechanical motion (external or molecular) just as the higher forms of movement produce other forms of movement at the same time. Chemical action is impossible without changes in temperature and electricity. Organic life is impossible without mechanical, molecular, chemical, thermal, electrical and other changes. But the presence of these accessory forms does not exhaust the essence of the chief form in each case. Some day we shall certainly experimentally " reduce " thinking to molecular and chemical motions in the brain ; but does this exhaust the essence of thought ? (*Dialectics of Nature.*)

I have quoted this passage not only because it clearly establishes the conception of biology held by dialectical materialism as compared with that of the " mechanists " (Engels, by the way, ridicules this designation " mechanists." He says : " Mechanism as applied to life is a helpless category, the most we could speak of would be chemicalism, unless we are to relinquish all understanding of terms "), but because it also clearly illuminates the method—described by Mr. Carritt as " vitalist "—of dialectical materialism in general. Dialectical materialism recognises nothing but *motion, movements, processes.* But motions, movements, are of higher and lower kinds : the lowest is mechanical motion, mere change of place, the highest is thought. The particular sciences are all concerned with different kinds of movement. The order in which the sciences are ranked expresses the sequence of the forms of movement themselves, the classification of the sciences is " the classification and arrangement according to their inherent sequence of these forms of movement themselves, and herein lies its importance." (Engels, *Dialectics of Nature.*) No one who bears this conception of dialectical materialism in mind will scent " vitalism " where all that has to be considered is the simple scientific phenomenon of the passing of one form of motion into another and higher one.

This conception of all existence as movement, process, is the fundamental condition for the understanding of dialectic. Only from this standpoint do the contradictions and opposites, their struggle, their transformation and conversion into one another, their inter-penetration, their dialectical interaction become comprehensible. Those who see rigid

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entities before them and have rigid concepts of them in their heads will find it impossible to understand how the same thing can possess contradictory determinations or change into its opposite. But to those who regard both things and their reflection in our minds as *processes*, it will not seem strange that a process should have contradictory tendencies, sides[4]), elements which conflict with one another, penetrate one another and change one into the other. Mr. Carritt remains on the standpoint of rigidly fixed entities and concepts (on the standpoint called " metaphysical " by Engels and Lenin), although present-day natural science (to say nothing of Marxism-Leninism) completely justifies the dialectical point of view. Hence he once more sees insoluble problems where relatively simple things are concerned :

> " When the process is most carefully described "—he maintains, for instance—" it is generally said to work by opposites or by contraries or by contradictions. But clearly most of the instances given are simply instances of otherness. Egg and bird, successive geological strata, feudalism and industrialism (does he mean capitalism ?—L.R.) —a and —a are not opposites, contraries or contradictories." (p. 385.)

Certainly all these things are only " otherness "—if they are conceived as rigid entities. But if they are conceived as processes, *arising from one another*, if they are grasped in their *process of becoming*, they represent a sequence of development which cannot be understood if the contradictory elements in the movement are torn out so that only their " otherness " and not the dialectical relation of becoming is seen. Let us take the example which strikes Mr. Carritt as particularly strange, namely, —a and —a. Regarded as isolated, rigid concept or things they are not even " otherness." One —a is as like the other as one pea is like another. But considered in the process of multiplication they are a movement of our thought and in this movement —a comes to life, moves, and passes into its opposite, into $+a^2$, just as it arose from —a as its opposite in the course of this movement of thought. Or let us take feudalism and capitalism. If capitalism is regarded merely as industrialism (that is, without *class content*), it seems only to be " otherness " in relation to feudalism. But capitalism is a certain *mode of production* connected with a *certain form of property* which arose from feudalism. It arose in the course of a violent class struggle, in which feudalism was " negated," *i.e.*, defeated by force, and the domination of feudal property was replaced by the domination of the opposing system of capitalistic property. Anyone who will take a glance at history will not need any explanation of how capitalism arose in opposition to feudalism, developed and was victorious. The same is true of capitalism and Communism.

So the " other " which arises from the dialectical process of becoming is not an other, *i.e.*, not only " otherness," but also *its other*, as Hegel emphasised :

[4]This word again stands for the German word *moment*.

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> "This harmony," he says, "is just absolute becoming, change—not becoming something other, now this and now an other. The essential point is that each different, particular thing is different from an other, not however abstractly different from any other, but different from *its* other." (Hegel, *History of Philosophy*.)

Upon which Lenin comments :

> Very true and important : the "other" as *its other*, development into *its* opposite." (*Critique of Hegel's Logic*.)

Are life and death, matter and thought, bourgeois and proletarian, capitalism (not industrialism, for communism will also be industrialism, and that even in a higher degree than capitalism) and communism only "otherness," and not also opposites which arise from a contradictory process and represent its opposite poles or the transformation of one into another ? If things are not considered in their real interconnection, in their conflict, in their *process* of development, then of course their dialectic cannot be understood. But in that case the fault does not lie with dialectic but with our own inability to think dialectically.

Finally, a few words about the way in which Mr. Carritt represents the conception of matter. He sees no difference between Hegel's absolute idea and the matter of the materialist and consequently regards dialectical materialism as a synthesis of idealism and materialism. The history of philosophy, we would reply, itself proceeded dialectically, *i.e.*, as a struggle and inter-penetration of opposites. But this is something wholly different from the eclecticism here represented by Mr. Carritt, the "synthesis" of materialism and idealism which would in fact be no synthesis but another of the many vain attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable fundamental tendencies of philosophy—materialism and idealism.

In reality the position is quite different. Engels writes in his *Ludwig Feuerbach* that modern philosophy received its special incentive from the powerful and ever more rapid onrush of progress in natural science and industry. Consequently "the systems of idealism became more and more impregnated with materialistic content and attempted to reconcile the opposites of mind and matter by pantheism, so that ultimately the Hegelian system only represents materialism idealistically turned upside down in method and content."

It is not surprising, therefore, that Hegel's "idea" is often compelled to make materialistic leaps. Does this means that Hegel's "idea" is the matter of the materialist ? Far from it. Why did Marx have to turn the Hegelian dialectic upside down and set it on its feet instead of on its head ? Why had Lenin to read Hegel "materialistically" ? The fact is that in the fundamental question of philosophy, the relation of thinking to being, Hegel is an idealist, for he conceives nature as an other being of the idea. He recognises the objective existence of nature, but

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only as a phase in the spontaneous movement of the idea. The spontaneous movement of the " concept " is at the same time the spontaneous generation of nature. The fact that it was nevertheless possible to use Hegel's dialectic in a reshaped materialistic form is ultimately bound up with a circumstance remarked upon by Schelling, among others. Schelling says of the Hegelian method :

> But this process is after all tacitly guided the whole time by the *terminus ad quem* (the end in view, L.R.), the real world, at which science is finally to arrive. In this allegedly necessary movement (of the concept, L.R.), there is therefore a double illusion : (1) the *concept* is substituted for *thought* and represented as moving spontaneously, whereas in itself the concept would remain perfectly immobile if it were not the concept of a *thinking subject*, i.e., if it were not a thought ; (2) thought is imagined as being only impelled by a necessity within itself, whereas obviously it has an end (nature ! L.R.), after which it is striving and which, however much the philosopher may try to conceal his consciousness of the fact, has all the more decisive an unconscious effect on the course of his philosophising.

Trendelenburg makes the same accusation against Hegel :

> Pure being as an empty abstraction can only be understood in so far as thought already possesses the world within itself and then withdraws from it into its self alone. (*Logische Untersuchungen*, I. p. 37.)

With this " double fault " of Hegelian Philosophy Marx also deals in his articles : " Critique of Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy in General." (Works I. 3. p. 154. *Gesamtausgabe.*)

In fact, like all idealists, Hegel starts from the real world, while he professes to " deduce " the world from the " idea." Thus in an idealistic form he describes the real laws of movement of the world while professing that they are the laws of the movement of the absolute idea. Hence it was possible for Hegel's idealist dialectics to be reshaped and made use of. The matter of the materialist, on the other hand, is the *real world* and nothing else. A vast difference, which Mr. Carritt has once more spared himself the trouble of thinking about. Ultimately Hegel's idealism, like every form of idealism, only represents a " refined," " more complex," form of religion and theology, which is as incompatible with the matter of the materialist as it is fully harmonious with the " idea "—for the " idea " is only another name for the God of theology.

What has been said explains why it was possible for Marx and Engels to rescue the Hegelian method, dialectic, from the bankruptcy of Hegelian idealism and of idealism in general. The dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels, therefore, is in no sense a synthesis of idealism and materialism (such a synthesis is impossible as we have said already), but a further development of pre-Marxist materialism, which has utilised the valuable result of Hegelian philosophy, dialectic. Hegel's idealism was and remained useless and was cast aside by Marx and Engels. The correct

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method which lay hidden within it, though in a distorted form, was reshaped on materialist lines and utilised by Marx and Engels. Such are the facts of the case.

Here I will close my contribution to the discussion, although I am conscious that from lack of space I have been obliged to deal inadequately with many points or to leave them untouched altogether. (I particularly regret that I have had to omit the questions relating to historical materialism, on which the views of Mr. Carritt are really antideluvian. He is kind enough for instance, to consider the principle of historical materialism " much more respectable " than the principle " *cherchez la femmes* " !) I hope, however, that I have dealt with the most important of the points on which the discussion turned. To sum up the main conclusions, it must once more be pointed out that our philosophy, which was originated by such geniuses as Marx, Engels and Lenin, which is the basis of the most powerful movement in the history of the world, our Communist Movement, and our sharpest weapon in the struggle for the liberation of the proletariat—a philosophy which is daily celebrating the greatest triumphs in the construction of a new social order in the land of Socialism —such a philosophy is not the ordinary philosophy of the schools and can neither be measured by the standard of the schools nor understood by them. One must dig deep before one can grasp it. And that demands, as we said at the beginning of this article, a decisive break with the traditional methods of thought—the revolutionising of thought and its liberation both from the traditional narrow English empiricism and from the idealistic eclecticism dominant in England to-day. This again can only be achieved, first by the most careful study of the socialist classics, the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and secondly by practical participation in the world-historic movement of the proletariat for the classless society. Only a revolutionary can revolutionise his thought ; only those who take their part in the struggle to change the world can rightly understand the theory of the world's dialectical development.

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MARX AND ENGELS ON THE BRITISH WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT—II

1879—1895

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The further series of extracts printed below were all taken from letters written by Engels, and cover the period from the middle of 1884, before the split in the S.D.F. which led to the formation of the Socialist League, to the eve of the General Election in November, 1885.—H.C.S.

HYNDMAN is thinking to *buy up* all the little movement here; he has done everything possible to ruin *To-day*. Bax, who put money into it, has erred in his calculations and will quickly be ruined. Hyndman, himself a rich man, and in addition having at his disposal resources supplied by the very rich artist-enthusiast, but untalented politician Morris,[1] will either take *To-day* under his protection or will smash it. In either case, he wants to be the sole master. I am glad that I have maintained an attitude of indifference to all this rubbish. Hyndman is a skilful and good business man, but a petty and hard-faced John Bull, possessing a vanity considerably in excess of his talent and natural gifts. Bax and Aveling have most excellent intentions, they are learning a little, but everything has gone to pieces, and these literateurs alone cannot do anything. The masses still will not follow them. When the men are sorted out a little, things will be better.—*Engels to K. Kautsky*,[2] Sunday, June 22, 1884.

Hyndman's book[3] is like himself—pretentious, dribbling trash, in which he, in places, attempts to stab Marx (because Marx is not an Englishman: Hyndman is the most chauvinistic John Bull that could exist) besides he knows English history so badly that, apart from what he learnt from the

[1]Morris, William (1834-1896). Utopian socialist, poet and artist. Joined the S.D.F. in 1883, but one of the leaders of the split which led to the founding of the Socialist League in 1885. Editor of *Commonweal*, author of *News from Nowhere*, &c.

[2]Kautsky, Karl (1854-). Leading German Social Democrat, and chief theoretician of the German S.D.P. and Second International. Remarkable in a changing world for his many changes of position, and as an "exponent of Marxism" for his numerous errors. Since 1917 has been a rabid enemy of Soviet Russia.

[3]*The Historical Basis of Socialism in England*; issued in 1883.

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Germans, it is all simply *incorrect*. For that matter Hyndman is on the eve of a fall; it is true that with his own money and Morris's he has now bought up the whole movement (including *To-day*, which Bax cannot carry on any longer owing to the lack of money and which has now entirely gone over to Hyndman), but his impatient striving for a dictatorial rôle, his hatred of all possible rivals, his obstinate pushing of himself into the first place has made even his most faithful friends bethink themselves, and his position in the Democratic Federation has been shaken. *Cet homme n'ira pas loin, il ne sait pas attendre.*[4] *Justice* gets more stupid every day; I hope that the end of this *first* phase of the movement is not far off; it is becoming terribly dreary.—*Engels to K. Kautsky*, London, July 19, 1884.

Of new developments (which, by the way, are damned few and far between) only the following: that Hyndman has now happily bought up *To-day* too. Bax, who put his little bit of money into it—I warned him last October that it wouldn't be enough—is *au bout de ses finances*,[5] and Hyndman took the opportunity to push his henchman Champion[6] forward and offered money through him on condition that Champion became editor in Bax's place. The latter, thus seized by the throat, thereupon resigned, and the result is that Hyndman now dominates the entire so-called Socialist Press. But with all these mannikins, whose talent and character are not in proportion to their ambition, the moment of victory is frequently that of defeat. This external success coincides with a failure within Hyndman's own faction. His following is more and more reducing itself to people directly bought over by him or pecuniarily dependent on him; he is daily losing ground in the Democratic Federation. The day before yesterday the Delegate Conference took place: I don't know what happened—Aveling was present, but is now in Derbyshire.—*Engels to Bernstein*, August 6, 1884.

All day I can only think of the pre-election campaign. . . . Here in England, where the reform bill[7] is strengthening the position of the workers, a new impulse (to cease dragging at the tail of the Radical left—H.C.S.) would be given in connection with the forthcoming elections of 1885; for the Social Democratic Federation, which consists primarily of literateurs, secondly of the remnants of former sects and thirdly of a sentimental public the opportunity would arise to become a real party.—*Engels to A. Bebel*, October 11, 1884.

[4]This man will not go far, he doesn't know how to wait.
[5]At the end of his money.
[6]Champion, Henry Hyde (1859-1928). Member of S.D.F. until 1886, afterwards editor of the *Labour Elector*, went to Australia in the nineties.
[7]Reform Bill. The Reform Act of 1884 which enfranchised miners and agricultural workers.

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Joynes of *To-day* has just been here. They want to publish *The Development*[8] in English, and I assigned the right of translation to Aveling a long time ago. But they don't want him to do it, because he and Hyndman are to some extent rivals; so they intended to suggest Shaw, who does not know German and planned to translate from the French. However, I rejected this and sent him to Aveling, whom I am coming to like better every day. These petty literary squabbles constitute a large part of the inner history of the movement here. And altogether matters are going very badly with them. Last Tuesday Madame Lafargue[9] was present at a meeting of the Council of the Social Democratic Federation; they were squabbling over some trifle, but so furiously that the words "damned liars" were scattered freely about. Evidently it must have been a fine scene. The only people I trust are Bax and Aveling, both of them are highly decent, intelligent and sincere, although they are in need of strong assistance from outside; of the rest, so far as I have had an opportunity of estimating them, I have a very low opinion.—*Engels to K. Kautsky*, London, October 20, 1884.

In England and France the transition to large scale industry is more or less finished. The conditions of the proletariat have now become stable; the agricultural and industrial regions, large-scale industry and domestic manufacture are shared out and secured as far as modern industry in general allows. Even the vacillations which are evoked every ten years by the periodic crisis have become customary conditions of existence. The political or directly socialist movements which, no matter how immature they were, arose in the period of industrial revolution have suffered defeat, and have left behind them rather a feeling of despair than of boldness; bourgeois capitalist development has proved to be stronger than the revolutionary opposition; for a new agitation against capitalist production a new, stronger impulse would be needed—for instance, England's deprivation of her present hegemony in the world markets or some special revolutionary event in France.—*Engels to Kautsky*, November 8, 1884.

Now for events here. On Saturday the Social Democratic Federation was happily shipwrecked. The bubble has burst rather earlier than I had expected—but it had to come.

Hyndman, a political adventurer and parliamentary careerist, had long ago got possession of the whole business. When Bax began a year ago with *To-day* there was not sufficient literary strength to keep

[8] *Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*, Aveling's translation. Was first published in 1892.

[9] Madame Lafargue. Laura, daughter of Marx (1846-1911). Married Paul Lafargue in 1868.

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even that little thing going, let alone a weekly. But only a weekly could be of use to Hyndman, so *Justice* was founded—with the money of two enthusiasts, Morris and Carpenter ; [10] and edited by Hyndman, assisted by various young intellectuals on the look-out for some new and paying movement (Fitzgerald and Champion), and by Joynes (an Eton master dismissed on account of an agitation undertaken with Henry George), who had become a sort of spare-time socialist. These were paid directly or indirectly (Hyndman is rich but thrifty) ; the rest had to co-operate gratis. All the correspondence of the Federation passed through Hyndman, Fitzgerald, and Champion, who laid only what suited them before the Committee, corresponded on their own account in the name of the Federation—in short Hyndman handled the Committee as Bismarck did the Reichstag. Loud complaints, which reached me amongst others. I replied : let the man go on, he's a *little* man, he can't last long, he *can't wait*. And he's broken his neck faster than I thought he would.

Morris, who was in Scotland a fortnight ago, there came upon such intrigues of Hyndman's that he declared that he could no longer work with a man of that sort. He had been suspicious for a long time, and a meeting with Scheu[11] in Edinburgh brought matters to a head. Hyndman had slandered Scheu as an Anarchist and dynamiter ; Scheu not only laid proofs to the contrary before Morris but proved too that Hyndman knew this. Similar swindles of Hyndman's in Glasgow, where the branch had received from Fitzgerald letters with the Federation's stamp, written not only without the instructions of the Committee but in direct contradiction to its decisions. Further, Hyndman had declared to several people that a rather mysterious letter to the Committee from Paris was a forgery fabricated by Madame Lafargue and Tussy to entrap him. But he had submitted that very letter to the Committee. Finally, in addition to a series of accusations hurled at each other by members of the Committee, the proof that he had invented a provincial branch which was really non-existent.

To cut a long story short, things came to a head last Tuesday. Hyndman was attacked on all sides : Scheu was there in person with documents in his hands ; Tussy had received a letter from her sister on the subject of the ostensible forgery. Pandemonium, and an adjournment till Saturday. Morris and Aveling were at my place before the session, and I was able to give them some further advice. None of the above facts could be denied either by Hyndman or by his following, which had been whipped together for the occasion. A vote of censure

[10]Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), author of "Towards Democracy," "Civilisation, its Cause and Cure," etc.

[11]Andreas Scheu (1844-1927), Austrian Social-Democrat with anarchistic leanings. Was given five years in 1870, and at the end of the term emigrated to England. Was a prominent member of the Socialist League.

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on Hyndman was passed. Thereupon the majority resigned from the Federation, the reasons being (1) that Hyndman could manufacture a majority at a Congress by means of his bogus branch, while they could not prove the non-existence of this branch, at least in time; (2) (the main reason) *because the whole Federation was really nothing but a swindle.*

Those who resigned were Aveling, Bax and Morris, the only honest men among the intellectuals—but men as unpractical (two poets and one philosopher) as you could possibly find. In addition the better of the known workers. They want to act in the London branches; they hope to win the majority and then let Hyndman carry on with his non-existent provincial branches. Their organ will be a little monthly journal. Finally, they will work on a modest scale, in proportion to their forces, and no longer act as though the English proletariat were bound to follow as soon as a few intellectuals became converted to Socialism and sounded the call. Their entire strength in London was (on Morris' admission) less than four hundred; in the provinces they had not a hundred supporters. *Justice* is printed in an edition of about 3,500.

Hyndman, together with his intellectual speculators, Fitzgerald, Champion, Burrows, Shaw, and probably Sketchley, who, as an old Chartist, seems to think himself entitled to a pension, is retaining *Justice* and *To-day*. With him are the remnants of various old democratic and socialist sects. Who will get the other fragments of the Federation remains to be seen. But since Hyndman will receive no more money for his unprofitable literary organs, either from Morris or from Carpenter, he will either have to pay out of his own pocket or sell himself, his organs and his fraction to the Christian Socialists or—to Lord Randolph Churchill and the Tory democracy. He must act quickly if he wishes to stand at the Spring elections.

I have the satisfaction of having seen through this whole swindle from the beginning; of having judged all these people correctly and prophesied the outcome, and also that this swindle would in the last resort to more harm than good.—*Engels to Bernstein*, December 29, 1884.

The Democratic Federation fell to pieces this Saturday. Hyndman, who had taken everything into his hands, was unmasked as an intriguer who sowed discord among the members of the Federation, concealed the correspondence for the Council, and organised bogus branches in the provinces with the object of getting his creatures into the conferences and congresses. He received a vote of censure, but the majority left the Federation mainly because the whole organisation is only a swindle. Moreover, it had hardly 400 paying members and its reading public are sentimental bourgeoisie. They wish to set up a new organisation

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(Morris, Bax, Aveling, etc.) and to leave Hyndman and his people (Fitzgerald, Champion, Burrows, etc.) *Justice* and *To-day*, and fully realising their own weakness want to commence a small monthly. As among those who have left the Federation are its principal paying capitalists (they have realised best of all how Hyndman used them), Hyndman will have to choose between two things: either himself cover the expenses of his non-paying journals, *i.e. Justice* and *To-day*, or sell his Party, inasfar as it is still loyal to him (which will become known in some 8 days) to the highest bidder. And as he wants to get into parliament at the next election, he will have to hurry up.—*Engels to Sorge*, December 31, 1884.

Here in England things are going quite well, though not in the form originated in Germany. Since 1848 the English Parliament has undoubtedly been the most revolutionary body in the world, and the next elections will open a new epoch, even if this does not reveal itself so very quickly. There will be workers in Parliament in increasing numbers, and each one worse than the last. All the scoundrels who played the part of respectable bourgeois radicals at the time of the International will have to show themselves in Parliament for what they are. Then the masses will turn socialist here too. Industrial overproduction will do the rest.—*Engels to J. P. Becker*,[12] June 15, 1885.

In the autumn two peaceful revolutions await us—the elections in France and in England.

. . . . Here in England the new electoral law will overthrow all the former party relationships. An alliance of Whigs and Tories and, therefore the creation of a great Conservative Party, resting not on two camps of large-scale land ownership, as hitherto, but on all—a party embracing all the conservative elements of the bourgeoisie: the banks, the financial potentates, trade and part of industry; on the other side the radical bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, the mass of great manufacturers, petty bourgeoisie, and at present, in the form of its tail, the proletariat newly awakening to political life,—there is the starting point for a revolution the like of which has not been seen in England since 1689.—*Engels to A. Bebel*, July 24, 1885.

The chronic depression in all the main spheres of industry continues to rule here and in France and America, especially in regard to iron and cotton. This is an unprecedented condition, although it quite inevitably arises from the capitalist system: over-production is so colossal,

[12]Becker, Johann Phillip (1809-1886). German worker, member of Communist League, took part in German 1848 revolution. Emigrated to Geneva, helped to form Geneva section of First International, friend and supporter of Marx and Engels.

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that it cannot even lead to a crisis. Free capital seeking investment has grown so much that the real rate of discount here wavers between 1 and 1½ per cent. per annum, and for short periods, with daily payment or daily money at call, money can be invested for some ½ per cent. per annum; but the very fact that the financial capitalist prefers to invest his money in this way, and not in new industrial enterprises, shows how rotten he considers all economy. This fear of new capital investments together with the old speculation, revealed even during the crisis of 1867 is the main reason why affairs do not develop into a severe crisis. But one way or another it must arrive, and then it is to be hoped that it will put an end here to the old trade unions. They most calmly preserve the craft character by which they have been distinguished from their very beginning, and which with every day becomes more and more intolerable. You probably think that in the engineers', builders', masons' unions and so on, every worker of the given trade may join without further ado. There can be no talk of that. Anyone who wishes to join a union must spend a number of years (usually seven) as a pupil of one of the members of that union. This measure was intended to limit the number of workers, but it has proved quite useless and has led only to the master receiving money, and in fact doing nothing for it. This was endurable down till 1848. But since then the enormous development of industry has created an entire class of workers, numerically no smaller and even exceeding the "skilled" workers in the trade unions; they work no worse and frequently better than the latter, but never can they become members of the union. These people are *absolutely nurtured* on the craft rules of the trade unions. But do you think that it ever entered into the heads of the unions to abolish this stupid state of affairs? Not in the least. I cannot remember ever reading of any such proposition being put forward at any congress of the trade unions. These fools want to reform society to accord with themselves and not themselves to accord with the development of society. They cling to their traditional prejudices, which only injure themselves, instead of getting rid of all this lumber, thus doubling their membership and their power and again becoming in fact what they are now becoming less and less, namely unions for all the workers in the given sphere against the capitalist. That I think will help you to understand much in the conduct of the privileged workers here.

Here the first necessity is that as many of the official labour leaders as possible should get into Parliament. Then affairs will quickly be put right; they will not be slow in unmasking themselves. In this regard the elections in November will help much, ten or twelve of them will certainly be elected if their Liberal friends don't kick them out at the last moment. The first elections on a new system are always rather

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a lottery and reveal only a tiny part of the revolution to which they are the introduction. But universal suffrage (and the new English law, in the absence of a peasantry and with England's leading industrial rôle, gives the workers as much strength as the German law) this electoral law (in Germany—H.C.S.) at the present time serves as the finest of levers to the proletarian movement, and it will be such a lever here also. That is why it is so important to put an end as quickly as possible to the Social Democratic Federation, whose leaders are all political careerists, adventurers and literary small fry. Their leader Hyndman, will assist this in all ways. He cannot wait until the twelfth hour strikes and in the chase after success is compromising himself more and more every day. He is a miserable caricature of Lassalle.—*Engels to A. Bebel*, October 28, 1885.

THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE

By an unfortunate misunderstanding some copies despatched to our subscribers were cut much shorter in length than usual; where readers will themselves be binding copies for 1933 *we shall be glad to exchange the original September copy for a new one to facilitate binding.*

SITUATION IN SOVIET FARMING

ANNA LOUISE STRONG. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, W.C. 1, October 13th, 8.15 p.m. (under the auspices of the Society for Cultural Relations)

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BOOK REVIEWS

AN APPROACH TO MARXIST PHILOSOPHY

Moscow Dialogues : A Discussion on Red Philosophy. By Julius F. Hecker. (Chapman & Hall Ltd., London.) 285 pages. 8s. 6d.)

DURING the past few years, with the deepening of the crisis, the crisis in the bourgeois philosophical outlook has got worse. This has reflected itself primarily in the growth of idealism, particularly amongst the so-called scientific philosophers of the character of Professor Jeans and Eddington. But on the other hand a second trend has shown itself in the growth of so-called " Marxist " tendencies amongst the bourgeoisie, with variations. Everyone has become a " revolutionist " from Middleton Murry to Sir Stafford Cripps. In this situation therefore it is very necessary to sharpen our struggle on the theoretical front, against all so-called Marxisms, at the same time recognising the trend of bourgeois thinkers towards the Marxist conception and the difficulties which they encounter along this path.

Such an example of this is Professor Hecker. His book is a very readable book on Marxist Philosophy, and Hecker has the decided advantages of having lived in Russia, of speaking Russian and studying at the Communist Academy. His book has been widely accepted as a very readable exposition of Marxist philosophy, but it is just an example of the way in which the bourgeoisie, sympathetic though they may be, approach Marxist philosophy and their inability to understand the basic principles of revolutionary Marxism.

Starting with a historic outline of the growth of Marxism, Hecker goes on to trace the development of Marxist philosophy through Kant and Hegel to the present day. The book is arranged in the form of discussions between Socratov (who is Hecker), a Communist philosopher and a Rotarian, a Business Man, a Senator, a Professor, a Humanist, a Banker and a Reformist, all on holiday in Russia.

The relationship of Marx to Feuerbach and the French materialists is then discussed in a fairly accurate fashion, but when we come to the chapter in which the laws of the Dialectics are interpreted we can clearly see the Professor's inability to understand the basic principles of the Dialectics. While he is able to state, because he has read industriously, the three main laws of the dialectics, he is unable to understand the basic principle which is the revolutionary principle.

In discussing the dialectical laws he talks about the interpenetration of opposites instead of the Marxist conception of revolutionary unity of opposites, widely treated in Lenin's notes on the Dialectic. This shows up glaringly when he attempts to explain the class struggle as interpenetration of opposites. He says :

> There are times when the class interests of the capitalist and the worker seem to dovetail into one another, and on this basis, the reformist elements in the Socialist movement, concluding that this interpenetration in the form of capital and labour could go on indefinitely. This is not the case. Interpenetration has also its breaks and upon the revolutionary philosopher lies the responsibility of recognising the moment when the split becomes inevitable, so that he may direct the newly created situation to a higher synthesis and into a new category of being.

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Two errors are here to be seen arising out of this outlook. First there is no " interpenetration " of opposites, particularly in the class struggle. The choosing of that particular word instead of the " unity " of opposites is no accident. There is endless struggle and a revolutionary unity arising out of this struggle and the unity is temporary as a consequence of the struggle.

Particularly the revolutionary philosophy does not wait to recognise the moment when the split of the unity, as a result of the struggle itself becomes inevitable, but actively works and struggles for that split (the revolutionary struggle), and it is just this lack of recognising the revolutionary content and kernel of the dialectic that the Professor misses the boat.

This tendency appears all through the book. The Professor talks about the " self-annihilation " of capitalist society ; the revolutionary tactics of Marxism are not mentioned in relation to the dialectic laws. He talks about Lenin as being a " faithful apologist " of Marxist philosophy instead of being a comrade who developed and deepened and extended Marxist philosophy by his very acts and deeds in the revolution. He refers to the " tragic failure " of the 1905 revolution, and not, as a dress rehearsal for 1917.

When we examine the chapter of the place of Lenin in revolutionary philosophy we can see that Lenin is given the rôle of a philosopher only in so far as he wrote philosophy. There is a separation of Lenin's philosophy, *e.g.*, his work on Empirio-Criticism and his whole revolutionary activities and energies. Hecker says that even in the period 1917-22 Lenin did not " forget his philosophy," not recognising that Lenin's whole writings in this period are Marxist dialectics *par excellence*. Philosophy for Hecker is a system.

The rôle of the party in carrying through the revolution is missed and Bolshevism is talked about as a " dictatorship " with an open door to democracy which, to a Marxist, is so much rubbish.

All these errors reach their culmination when one of the most important developments of Marxism, viz., into Leninism, is discussed. Previously he said Lenin was a " faithful apologist," of Marx and this understanding of Leninism is seen through the whole of this chapter.

Some of the more obvious points of development are shown, but completely missing is the law of uneven development of capitalism, which is the kernel of Leninism and the touchstone of world revolutionary tactics, the tactics of the Comintern. Lenin's development of Imperialism is missed and the theory of the State does not receive its full value.

It is impossible owing to lack of space to go into all the other chapters of the book in which philosophical development since the revolution, struggle on the philosophical front, the question of religion and so forth are discussed, but all that has been said clearly shows the necessity for a sharpening of the fight on the philosophical front. Many bourgeois thinkers are coming over to the revolutionary programme, many are writing books on philosophy. We must be clear as to the actual theoretical content of Marxism and Leninism and, whilst accepting and sympathetically treating these advances of bourgeois thinkers, conduct an even sharper struggle to show that no bourgeois influences enter our philosophy.

The book is well worth reading, but it is not a statement on red philosophy, as some people are claiming.

J. G.

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AMMUNITION ON THE FIVE YEAR PLAN.

Summary of the Fulfilment of the First Five Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy of the U.S.S.R. State Planning Commission of the U.S.S.R. (Allen & Unwin.) 5s. (paper); 7s. 6d. (cloth). 296 pp.

THE British worker in attempting to get the U.S.S.R. into proper focus is not entirely free from the influence of capitalist teaching and its effect on the mind. The worker is generous enough minded to believe that Russia has accomplished much, but many are still sceptical of the success that is claimed to follow the proletarian effort to conquer the most complicated problems.

Student and critic will find ammunition for their locker in the *Summary of the Fulfilment of the First Five Year Plan*, now in circulation.

This book tells in simple language that "the solution of these important political and economic problems could not be given within the limits of annual plans, and this created the necessity of drawing up a Five Year Plan," and how success begs assistance in newer ideas and methods—the birth of these mean a consequent leap forward in production, the fulfilment and over-fulfilment in many cases being the result.

When one encounters the Russian at work in the factory and feels the enthusiasm which dominates him or her—because "the woman worker of the Soviet Union is freeing herself from the drudgery of house work . . ." one feels that the summary errs on the side of modesty. Tables are shown, and alongside their figures we find quotations from the foremost capitalist countries' own figures, and the comparisons show the U.S.S.R. in a proud position.

As each succeeding phase of this great experiment is laid before the reader, one thinks of the dire plight and deterioration of the worker struggling along under a decaying system. There is no extravagant language used in this analytical summary, there are no bold headlines, and tucked away in the middle of a paragraph there is found this wonderful statement: ". . The rise of the material and cultural living standards of the toiling masses, the complete elimination of unemployment, the overcoming of poverty and pauperism in the countryside, the socialisation of an overwhelming part of labour in agriculture, the seven-hour work day—these are the main results of the first Five Year Plan in the realm of labour." In bringing about this condition of affairs, their "74 per cent. of the entire proletariat of the Soviet Union who are members of trade unions" played an important part. Our 28 per cent. trade unionists (quoted from the *Ministry of Labour Gazette* in this book) have here an inspiration. Trade unionists, co-operators and all political organisations should secure this book. It is the worker's right to be armed with this knowledge.

JAS. B.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution. Frederick Engels. (Martin Lawrence.) 155 pp. 5s.

Armoured Train. V. Ivanov. (Martin Lawrence.) 59 pp. Cloth, 3s. 6d.; Paper, 1s. 6d.

Children Under Capitalism: International Pamphlets, No. 33. Grace Hutchins. (Workers' Bookshop.) 23 pp. 2d.

The Russian Revolution. L. Trotsky; with a foreword by J. Maxton, M.P. (Labour (I.L.P.) Literature Dept.) 40 pp. 6d.

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The Outlook of Science : Modern Materialism. R. L. Worrall. (John Bale & Danielsson.) 203 pp. 8s. 6d.

Maxim Gorki. M. J. Olgin. (Martin Lawrence.) 64 pp. 1s. 6d.

The Dictatorship of Things. Geoffrey Sainsbury. (Methuen.) 166 pp. 5s.

Population. Vol. I., No. 1. Journal of International Union for Scientific Investigation of Population Problems. (Allen & Unwin.) 76 pp. 2s. 6d.

The German Revolution. Joseph King. (Williams & Norgate.) 152 pp. Boards, 3s. 6d. ; Paper, 2s. 6d.

The Blindness of Poverty. Money and Wealth. L. A. Fenn. (Williams & Norgate.) 72 pp. 2s. 6d. each.

National Shopkeeping. A. Allan. (G. C. Mackay Ltd.,) 49 pp. 1s.

The Challenge of Europe. Sherwood Eddy. (Allen & Unwin.) 335 pp. 10s. 6d.

The Ferry. M. Egert. (Martin Lawrence.) 151 pp. 2s.

Six Seamen. Mike Pell. (Martin Lawrence.) 71 pp. 1s. 6d.

Tales of Modern China. Oskar Erdberg. (Martin Lawrence.) 198 pp. 3s.

Barricades in Berlin. K. Neukrantz. (Martin Lawrence.) 182 pp. 2s. 6d.

Storm Over the Ruhr. H. Marchwitz. (Martin Lawrence.) 272 pp. 3s.

On Guard for the Soviet Union. Maxim Gorki. (Martin Lawrence.) 173 pp. 5s.

White Stone. M. Chumandrin. (Martin Lawrence.) 80 pp. 1s. 6d.

Karl Marx. L. Perchik. (Modern Books.) 64 pp. 3d.

Moscow Trial. Authentic Report. (Modern Books.) 64 pp. 3d.

U.S.S.R. does not mean Mexico. Conversation between M. Litvinov and Sir E. Ovey. (Modern Books.) 8 pp. ½d.

Unemployment and the Child. An enquiry. Save the Children Fund. 137 pp. 2s. 6d.

Wrecking Activities at Power Stations in the Soviet Union. Translation of the Official Verbatim Report. The case of L. Thornton, W. MacDonald, J. Cushny, A. Monkhouse, C. Nordwall, W. Gregory, A. Kutuzowa and eleven others. (Allen & Unwin.) 798 pp. 10s. 6d.

Inflation . Irving Fischer. (Allen & Unwin.) 104 pp. 3s. 6d.

Summary of the Fulfilment of the First Five Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy of the U.S.S.R. State Planning Commission of the U.S.S.R. (Allen & Unwin.) 296 pp. 5s. (paper) 7s. 6d. (cloth)

Meerut Conspiracy Case. Meerut Prisoners' Release Committee, 53 Grays Inn Road, W.C.1. 16 pp. 1d.

Democracy, Debts and Disarmament. Walton Newbold, M.A. (Methuen & Co.) 343 pp. 8s. 6d.

Three Days that Shook Edinburgh. Henry McShane. (N.U.W.M., 11a White Lion Street, E.1.) 20 pp. 1d.

Engineering Profits in Greater London. W. Fox. (Labour Reseach Department.) 32 pp. 3d.

Indian Front. A News Bulletin, Nos. 1—6 (Fortnightly). B. L. Sen, 21 Stephen Street, W.1. 12 pp. 2d.

Lenin—A Biography. Ralph Fox. (Victor Gollancz.) 320 pp. 5s.

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Published by the Proprietors, the Trinity Trust, 7 John Street, W.C.1, and Printed by the Leicester Co-operative Printing Society Limited, 99 Church Gate, Leicester

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